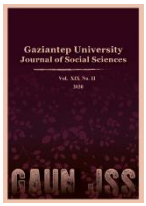

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Araştırma Makalesi ● Research Article

A Social Ecological Reading of H. G. Wells's *The Sleeper Awakes*

H. G. Wells'in The Sleeper Awakes Romanının Toplumsal Ekolojik Okuması

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Ö Z

Geç dönem Viktorya Çağı'nın önde gelen ütopya ve distopya yazarlarından H. G. Wells, The Sleeper Awakes adlı romanında iki yüz yıl sonrasında Londra'nın ve dünyanın evrilebileceği politik konjonktür hakkında bir portre çizer. Roman, dünya hükümetinin küresel olarak tüm kontrolü elinde bulundurduğu ve kapitalizim tarihsel olarak nihai bir zafer elde ettiği yeni bir dünya düzeninde işçi sınıfının toplumsal baskı altına alındığı bir gelecek betimler. Ayrıca, söz konusu distopik kurguda kırsal bölgelerdeki toplumsal yaşam bitmiş ve tüm nüfus kentte toplanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı The Sleeper Awakes romanında tahakküm mekanizmasının sadece toplumsal alanda değil aynı zamanda doğa üzerinde de yürütüldüğünü göstermektir. Buna ek olarak, her iki alanda kurulan tahakkümün birbirinden bağımsız olmadığı, aksine birbirlerini destekleyen süreçler olduğu ortaya koyulmuştur. Bu bağlamda çalışma Murray Bookchin'in öncülüğünü yaptığı toplumsal ekolojiyi kuramsal bir çerçeve olarak kullanmaktadır. Bu kuramdan hareket edilerek romanda ikinci doğanın birinci doğadan yabancılaşmasının nedenleri üzerinde durulmuş ve bu yabancılaşmanın politik ve toplumsal neticeleri gösterilmiştir. Buna bağlı olarak hem nüfusun hem de politik gücün merkezileşmesinin doğa-insan ilişkileri bakımından yol açtığı olumsuz sonuçlar üzerinde durulmuştur. Diğer bir taraftan ise toplumsal hiyerarşileri destekleyen bir sistem içinde doğanın da hiyerarşik ilişkiler ağı içinde nesneleştirildiği ifade edilmiştir. Böylelikle bu çalışma ideolojik ve politik tartışmaların ön planda olduğu The Sleeper Awakes'in ekolojik kaygılara da hitap edebilecek bir metin olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

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A B S T R A C T

H. G. Wells, one of the pioneering utopian and dystopian authors of the late Victorian Age, delineates a political conjuncture into which London and the rest of the world may evolve two centuries later. The novel depicts a future in which the working class is socially oppressed in a new order where a world government that holds the reign of power globally and capitalism has gained an ultimate victory historically. Moreover, in this dystopic representation, the social life in the countryside has ended and the whole population is concentrated in the city. This study aims to demonstrate that the mechanism of domination does not only have a formative power in the social sphere but also is extended towards nature in The Sleeper Awakes. Furthermore, it is manifested that the domination over these two spheres is far from being independent of each other; on the contrary, they are mutually supportive processes. In this context, this paper uses social ecology, led by Murray Bookchin, as the theoretical framework for reading the novel. Departing from this theory, the reasons for the alienation of second nature from first nature, and the political and social outcomes of this alienation in the work have been demonstrated. Correspondingly, the implications of the centralization of both the population and political power with respect to human-nature relationships have been delved into. In addition to these, nature is shown to be objectified within a hierarchical web of relations in a system that cements social hierarchies. Thus, this study puts forward that The Sleeper Awakes, a text that foregrounds the ideological and political discussions, may also address the ecological preoccupations.

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Introduction

Utopia and dystopia are basically spatial genres. Neither the achievements of 'utopia' nor the nightmare of dystopia could be possible without spatial arrangements that supplement any given political aspiration. These spatial arrangements may consist of architectural and/or ecological imaginings. They have a longstanding existence; yet "the emergence of modern ecological thinking during the Romantic period," says Kate Rigby "gave rise to new ways of imagining future, both utopian and dystopian" (2012, p.142). The non-human environment started to have growing materiality in the projections of the future in an age of turmoil and radical transformations in British society. The places where the effects of these transformations were deeply felt were the urban spaces rather than the countryside where the rhythm of life had been more or less similar to what it had been a few centuries ago. The process of industrialization, which geared up in the 19th century and exacerbated the ecological degradation, is concomitant with the displacement of the rural population. According to the statistics, the population of London which was one million in 1801 reached six and a half million at the beginning of the 20th century (Mateos, 2013, p. 7). Thus, the changes in this century were unfolding in two ways, having social and ecological repercussions.

Being an author who wrote at a time when these shifts reached a climactic point, H. G. Wells was a keen observer of the social predicaments, which shaped his fiction. As John Sloan observes "Wells's early romances can be interpreted as futuristic allegorical dramatizations of specific contemporary anxieties" (2016, p. 139). One of his texts that reflects these anxieties is *The Sleeper Awakes* which extrapolates the condition of England and the world in the 22nd century. This paper aims to read this novel from a social ecological point of view and argues that *The Sleeper Awakes* can be read as an ecologically conscious text that underpins the close relationship between ecological and social problems. This study is the first environmentalist attempt to read and interpret Wells's *The Sleeper Awakes.* However, this paper does not aim to define H. G. Wells as an author whose views reflect the agenda of social ecology. Though social ecology provides a solid ground in the interpretation of the text itself, Wells's views on science and technology as well as his strong belief in the formative power of them in shaping society through wide-scale social planning are decidedly at odds with social ecology's appeal for spontaneity, organic and small scale communitarian politics. As John Sloan observes, "[t]o many earlier critics, Wells's scientific scenarios for planetary health suggested totalitarian state power and disregard for local loyalties and allegiances" (2016, p. 138). As such, he negates the political decentralization that became one of the requisites of the social ecological ideal.

Social Ecology and its Discontents

Social ecological school of thought, influenced by Bakunin and Kropotkin, argues that what is ecological and what is social are inextricably related to each other and the ecological breakdown can only be averted through a radical social and political shift from hierarchical social structures into more egalitarian and communitarian ones. The leading figure of social ecology, Murray Bookchin summarizes his theory as follows: "the very notion of domination of nature by man stems from the very real domination of human by human" (1982, p. 1). To espouse this thesis in *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982), he undertakes an anthropological inquiry into the birth and development of hierarchies that also put nature into one of the levels of domination. Bookchin's renunciation of these relations makes social ecology "a form of eco-anarchism, in which the cause of the ecological crisis lies in the structures of hierarchies and power associated with modern bureaucratic state and corporate capitalism" (Barry, 2003,

p. 242). According to the social ecological point of view, the capitalist mode of production, which adopts the view of 'grow or die,' has not only brought about a new dimension to the social hierarchies that have been governing the societies for a long time but also downgrades nature within the same hierarchical relations, regarding it a mere source of economic benefit. According to Bookchin, an ecological perspective disregarding such hierarchical ties is likely to misdiagnose the source of the ecological crisis that humanity faces today (2006, p. 20).

Bookchin's criticism, at this point, is mainly directed against deep ecology. To grasp the reason for this criticism, one needs to understand what the social ecologists call "first nature" and "second nature". The former refers to the biological world in which human beings live and of which they are biologically a part, and the latter refers to "human social and symbolic life which is 'within' first nature" (Morris, 2017, p. 2). Thus, second nature is not a deep bifurcation from first nature, but it is embedded within the larger frame of first nature. According to the social ecological view, these two spheres must complement each other and have an interdependent relationship; yet the historical process that has culminated in the total objectification of nature and human beings has uncoupled these two spheres. While social ecology calls for a reconciliation of "first nature" and "second nature," deep ecology cherishes biospheric egalitarianism by repudiating the concepts of first and second nature. For deep ecology, there is only a single nature in which humanity has no privileged position and in which every living being has "*the equal right to live and blossom*" (Naess, 1973, p. 96; emphasis in original). Bookchin heavily criticizes the deep ecological movement that equalizes human beings with other living beings because he considers such a monistic attitude misanthropic. To sum up, Bookchin repudiates both dualistic and monistic approaches to nature (Best, 1998, p. 339). The dualistic point of view regards nature as separate from human beings and objectifies it as a whole, which is an attitude that can be observed especially in the capitalist mode of production. On the other hand, according to Bookchin, the monistic approaches,

> [r]omanticize nonhuman nature as wilderness and see it as more authentically "natural" than the works of humans, they freeze nonhuman nature as a circumscribed domain in which human innovation, foresight and creativity and have no place and offer no possibilities. (Bookchin, 2006, p. 26)

In this view, humanity enjoys a distinct position among the other elements of nature due to reason. Though humanity has evolved from first nature, its cultural achievements, which constitute second nature, distinguish it from the other species. However, this seeming privilege becomes agreeable for social ecology only if the reason in question is libertarian, not instrumental, one. This argument shows that Bookchin's ecological thought is neither dualistic nor monistic, but dialectic in that he detects reciprocity between first and second natures. He detects this reciprocity through a genealogy of hierarchical social structures that ironically justify their existence through examples drawn from nature. In his view, today's ecological crisis has its roots in the transformation from organic societies to hierarchical and centralized ones. However, Bookchin never uses "hierarchy" to denote social classes in Marxist terms; instead, he employs this term to refer to a wider web of relations of domination. Though it includes economic domination, it also consists of other non-material types of domination. Bookchin explains his understanding of hierarchy as follows: "By hierarchy, I mean the cultural, traditional and psychological systems of obedience and command, not merely economic and political systems to which the terms class and State most appropriately refer" (1982, p. 4).

The abovementioned relations of domination are born out of the deviation from organic societies. An organic society is a type of social form in which the constituents of first nature and second nature are in an interdependent relationship and which is marked by "[t]he

absence of coercive and domineering values" (Bookchin, 1982, p. 45). Exactly because they are formed by the principles of interdependence and need, they are unplanned and spontaneous social formations. Since these societies lack any kind of hierarchical structure, the relationship between humanity and nature is not based on a mentality of domination. However, Bookchin's idea of "organic society" has been subjected to much criticism with respect to its historicity. Though the societies on which he grounds his social ecological views are hypothetical, Bookchin presents them as historical truth (White, 2003, p. 43).

The disappearance of the organic societies not only brings about hierarchies but also centralizes political power and government. Small-scale and non-hierarchical human communities start to be assembled under a more centralized government in developing cities and states. At this point, it may be convenient to refer to Lewis Mumford, a historian and sociologist who has considerable influence on Bookchin. Mumford is known for his regionalist outlook which Mark Lucarelli (1995) summarizes as neotechnics (the adoption of ecological technologies), organicism (the growing influence of nature on culture), and community (the formation of small- scale communities) (p. 22). According to Mumford, the cities, though they facilitate social relations, do not provide a fertile ground for collective action (1970, p. 250). The lack of collective action is an indicator of the lack of interdependency, a principle highlighted by Bookchin, as well. The depletion of mutual interdependencies in the cities is in parallel with the depletion of nature: "As the pavement spreads, nature is pushed farther away: the whole routine divorces itself more completely from the soil, from the visible presence of life and growth and decay, birth and death" (Mumford, 1970, p. 253). In this statement, Mumford describes a process of alienation in which first nature and second nature lose their dialectical relationship. He contends that the reversal of this alienation is contingent on regional planning, rather than global ones, and an acknowledgment of land and soil as the cardinal elements of urban development (1970, p. 305). In this way, the regional differences would be recognized and each region would develop its own system of first-second nature interdependence, which, in turn, can obviate the relations of domination between humanity and nature. Mumford relates how the relations between humanity and nature are likely to shape once a regionalist perspective is adopted: "we think of the region as a whole, and we realise that in each geographic area a certain balance of natural resources and human institutions is possible, for the finest development of the land and people" (1927, p. 279).

However, as emphasized in the following parts of this study, industrialization and capitalism emptied the small-scale settlements of their population and relocated these people to the growing cities. This process not only resulted in the disappearance of social life in the small-scale settlements but also downgraded them to serve the needs of the rapidly expanding cities. The formation of great cities, according to Mumford, "is, in fact, the constant recruitment of a proletariat, capable of accommodating itself to an environment without adequate natural or cultural resources" (1970, p. 249). According to this point of view, the history of the metropolis can be read as the history of the domination of the countryside by the cities.

The hierarchical relations among the people and the domination of nature surely did not start in the 19th century. For instance, Bookchin dates the start of these relations back to the breakdown of the early Neolithic village (1982, p. 62). However, the most tangible outcomes of the objectification of nature start with the Industrial Revolution. Though the impact of human beings on nature started at a much earlier date, 'Anthropocene' designating the period of palpable effects of human activity on Earth has a history that goes back to two centuries earlier (Crutzen and Stoermer, 2000, p. 17). Similarly, Lynn White indicates that

only after the first half of the 19th century, did the people realize that scientific knowledge is an effective means to achieve dominance over nature (1996, p. 4). For this reason, the social, economic and, technological transformations that took place in the 19th century can also be viewed as ecological transformations.

The uncertainties about the future in the face of these intense and radical changes in the 19th century led to the production of projections and speculations on the future, which brought utopian and dystopian narratives to the forefront of the literary milieu. *The Sleeper Awakes* by H. G. Wells is an outcome of this cultural framework and it embodies not only premonitions about the possible social condition of a future society but also implications about the trajectory of ecological breakdown. What is more crucial is that the social and ecological conditions, as will be demonstrated in the following pages, are heavily tied to each other, which makes the social ecological perspective a suitable theoretical framework for this study.

Awakening into the Centralization and Domination

The Sleeper Awakes is not the most popular piece of Wells's oeuvre, nor is it the most favourite work of the author himself. Because he was writing it synchronously with *Love and Mr. Lewisham* in 1899, he could not pay due attention to this work. Though he makes some changes to it in 1910, Wells calls it "one of the most ambitious and least satisfactory of [his] works" (as cited in Hammond, 1979, p. 94). Despite its unfavourable position among the author's works, *The Sleeper Awakes* is an archetype of spatial imagination in many subsequent science fiction novels due to its vertical architecture and domed city representation. Moreover, its influence on the subsequent science fiction and dystopian fiction overshadowed Wells's other novels (Booker, 1994, p. 288). In *The Sleeper Awakes,* the protagonist Graham, living in the late 19th century, wakes up in the year 2100 after a long sleep following a severe case of insomnia. The central question of the novel is what kind of a transformation England and the rest of the world have passed through in the meantime. Confrontation with an 'alien' culture is a recurrent theme that runs through much of Wells's fiction. Graham wakes up in Great Britain, where he lived in the 19th century, only to find that a new world order has been founded. He tries to understand it from one of the upper floors of a skyscraper where he wakes up. In this new order, in which a world government (a system Wells himself supports) has come into existence, Graham is the master of the globe as a result of his wealth accumulated through compound interest and inheritance, and the administration of this wealth correctly by a board of trustees. In addition to this, capitalism is depicted to be the triumphant side across the world. London, dominated by corporate capitalism, is governed by a group called 'the Council' at the beginning of the novel. The Council does not let Graham contact the ordinary people of London on the ground that they cannot estimate Graham's possible reactions to the radical social changes that took place in the meantime. However, starting a revolution on a global scale under Ostrog's leadership, the dissidents to the Council kidnap him. Though the revolution overthrows the Council, the new leader, who sticks to corporate capitalism, does not reform the conditions of the working class, which precipitates a new revolutionary movement led by Graham against Ostrog. Despite the suspense created by this antagonism, the open-ended conclusion of the novel does not declare the triumphant party but only depicts Graham's falling plane.

Although London, represented in *The Sleeper Awakes,* is based on the extrapolations of Wells, these extrapolations are based on the empirical observation of the author in his age. For instance, as a reflection of the rapidly increasing population of London in the late 19th century, more than thirty-two million people reside in Wells's fictional city whose boundaries are strictly demarcated and this boost in population, to a large extent, is enabled by the

displacement of the rural population as in Wells's time. Regarding the urban sprawl, in *Anticipations*, published a couple of years following *The Sleeper Awakes*, Wells predicts a horizontal and centrifugal development of the cities due to the improvements in transportation technologies (1902, p. 46). Wells's argument about the suburban proliferation chimes with Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Movement which advocates an eclectic model in which the country and the city are interfused with each other. Being a contemporary of Wells, Howard observes the shortcomings of both urban and rural spaces and states that "[t]own and country *must be married*" (1902, pp. 17-18; emphasis in original). However, being a dystopian city, London in *The Sleeper Awakes* is far from both Wells's theses in *Anticipations* and Howard's Garden City. The suburbia which already existed around the cities to some extent in the 19th century and which can be deemed spaces of transition between the country and the town is obliterated from the urban texture in the novel. Graham's first flight experience saliently demonstrates the annihilation of the suburbia:

> The gradual passage of town into country through an extensive sponge of suburbs […] existed no longer. […] The city limits were indeed as sharply defined as in the ancient days when the gates were shut at nightfall and the robber foeman prowled to the very walls. (2005, p. 144)

Despite the superficial similarity between the future London and the ancient cities, Wells's fictional city is free from perceived dangers from without, for "the city had swallowed up humanity" (Wells, 2005, p. 128). The centripetal movement of the population is directly proportional to the centralization of political power and the consolidation of hierarchical relations. The city not only atrophies local peculiarities of the countryside but also facilitates the control mechanisms of the autocratic government within a space whose limits are clearly marked off. The repressive rationality of the world government is further cemented by the vertical architecture of the city that puts an altitudinal distance between the ruling class and the working class. While the viewer from an upper floor assumes a god-like perspective, another viewer from the ground level suffers from the feeling of diminution in the face of a grandiose architecture over which he/she has no control. Furthermore, future London portrays a problematic scenario in terms of environmental justice. While the upper classes live in environmentally healthy buildings, the lower classes are forced to work in places whose conditions deteriorate the respiratory system of the labourers (2005, p. 195). Indeed, Graham's first impressions when he wakes up are not related to the political transformation but to the alteration of the physical space of London, which also has ecological implications:

> The place into which he looked was an aisle of Titanic buildings, curving spaciously in either direction. Overhead mighty cantilevers sprang together across the huge width of the place, and a tracery of translucent material shut out the sky. Gigantic globes of cool white light shamed the pale sunbeams that filtered down through the girders and wires. (2005, p. 42)

Wells's London is a domed city, echoing the Crystal Palace in which the technological improvements of the British Empire as well as the materials acquired through imperial expansion were demonstrated in 1851. As such, the city reminds the reader of the sanctuary of imperial domination and exploitation of the colonized nations and colonized nature. In addition to the implications of repressive rationality of the imperial history, the domed city catalyzes the separation of first nature and second nature in London. Though the novel is at a loss to relate why the city became domed during Graham's deep sleep, a social ecological perspective can provide a logical insight into the reason for it. The repressive rationality of the world government expunges first nature from the social life in an attempt to 'naturalize' the relations of domination and hierarchy, for the spontaneity of nature is incompatible with the rationally planned order. In order to achieve what he calls "libertarian rationality," Bookchin emphasizes the urgent need to change "overwhelming orientation of rational canons toward control, manipulation, domination, and estrangement that collectively bias authoritarian

rationality" (1982, p. 307). In the above-given quotation from the novel, the artificial illumination of the city serves to the same purpose, estranging the people from the natural cycle of day and night as well as from the shifting duration of daytime during the course of a year. In this city, the rhythms of life and industrial production are no longer conditioned by natural processes but are heavily tied to an abstract version of time.

In Wells's dystopia, the complexity of nature, in Bookchin's words, is "reduced to simple Galilean physico-mechanical properties" (1980, p. 59). The domed city, a recurrent image in many utopian and dystopian narratives, is symptomatic of an inimical mentality towards nature. The post-apocalyptic connotation of a domed city leads to its conceptualization as a place of refuge. Frederick Kreuziger posits that it "is a womb in which humankind is nourished and protected against the onslaughts of change and terrors of history" (1986, p. 63). Indeed, many examples of science fiction canon like Arthur C. Clarke's *The City and the Stars* (1956), Scott Russell Sander's *Terrarium* (1985), and the film version of *Logan's Run* (1976) directed by Michael Anderson present an image of uninhabitable and dangerous outside. However, in *The Sleeper Awakes*, the countryside is neither ecologically uninhabitable nor implied to harbour danger. For this reason, the motive of building a domed city in Wells's work may be associated with what Simon C. Estok calls "ecophobia," a condition that "can embody fear, contempt, indifference or lack of mindfulness (or some combinations of these) toward the natural environment" (2018, p. 1). The ecophobic attitude is not without reason. One of the prerequisites of the natural environment is biodiversity and social ecology transposes this requirement into the social sphere. The repudiation of first nature that is based on diversity becomes a blueprint for the social and cultural oppression of the city dwellers in the novel. For example, the strict sumptuary laws of the city force the common urbanites to wear uniform blue costumes. This is an example of "unity by suppression" which Lewis Mumford uses to denote a kind of unity "in which a single pattern of life is universalized" (1970, p. 311). The other type of unity that Mumford conceptualizes is "unity by inclusion" which suggests a more egalitarian type of unity respecting individual peculiarities. This type of unity is also akin to the type of diversity that exists in a healthy ecosystem and countryside. In an attempt to justify his administration, Ostrog, who overthrows the Council but sustains its oppressive system, tells Graham:

> On the open countryside one man is as good as another, or nearly as good. The earlier aristocracy had a precarious tenure of strength and audacity. […] There were insurrections, duels, riots. The first real aristocracy, the first permanent aristocracy, came in with castles and armour, and vanished before the musket and bow. But this is the second aristocracy. […] The common man now is a helpless unit. In these days, we have this great machine of the city, and an organization complex beyond his understanding. (2005, p. 168)

The image of the city as a machine, an idea that would be exclaimed as the ethos of a new architectural aesthetics by Le Courbusier two decades after *The Sleeper Awakes*, undermines the possibility of building organic communitarian politics. Within a self-perpetuating 'machine,' people can hardly activate what Bookchin calls a libertarian reason. Their agency and ingenuity are as blurred as they are in Bookchin's criticism of deep ecology which is explained in the theoretical section of this study. Moreover, Ostrog's opinions on political history could not have better reflected social ecology's emphasis on the parallelism between the domination of nature and the domination of humanity. The total domination of humanity becomes a culmination of architectural improvements and modifications that pave the way for the construction of hierarchies. In a Rousseauian vein, Ostrog acknowledges that he could not have ensured his domination without the help of the built environment that entirely excludes first nature. The reason lurking beneath this separation is that the more second nature approximates the first one, as it is in the 'open countryside,' the more it will be informed by

the operation of first nature. Second nature isolated from the first one fosters the idea of egotistical independence, which, in turn, obscures the realization of mutualism. For this reason, Ostrog is unable to recognize his own dependence on those whose labor he exploits. Ironically, in another attempt to justify his domination, Ostrog draws examples from nature: "So long as there are sheep Nature will insist on beasts of prey […] The end will be the Over-man- for all the mad protests of humanity" (2005, p. 171). Ostrog's social Darwinist point of view is, according to social ecological perspective, a misunderstanding and a distortion of the mechanism of first nature. Kropotkin condemns such an attitude for putting the "personal advantages to the height of a biological principle which humans must submit to as well" (1902, p. 10).

However, despite all his libertarian and radical Victorian intellectual identity, Graham cannot be claimed to embrace a social ecological view of nature that construes human relations on the basis of interdependence. His notions on social hierarchies are, indeed, as deep as Ostrog's support for these hierarchies. Though disillusioned by the results of Ostrog's revolution, and thus, harbouring a grudge against him, Graham does not mount an effective resistance against Ostrog until the moment he hears that Ostrog summons an army of African soldiers to crush the opposition against himself. To dissuade Ostrog, he exclaims that "[w]hite men must be mastered by white men" (2005, p. 202). It should be noted that Graham does not wake up in the future with a *tabula rasa* mind; he is already acculturated by a political atmosphere that permeated into discourse in the Victorian society. His statement rationalizes hierarchical relations in two ways. Firstly, the domination of white men by the other white men does not seem to be an objectionable solution for Graham in this political crisis. This acceptance clearly makes his underhanded opposition to Ostrog count for nothing. Secondly, in addition to his acceptance of domination 'by white men,' he falls prey to the racist discourse of his period. Imperialism and racism have a special relationship with nature, not just because of the obvious fact of exploitation of nature in the colonized lands, but because the colonized subjects, according to the European point of view, were closer to nature, or in Hannah Arendt's words explaining the origins of totalitarianism, they were "'natural' human beings who lacked the specifically human character" (1973, p. 192), which also put them beyond the ethical boundaries of the colonizers. The creed that they are closer to nature eventually leads to the justification of racist discourse and maltreatment of them because a political power that has no qualms about the degradation of nature is unlikely to consider the degradation of these 'natural human beings' strange. Thus, the intervention of the African police force in the white affairs becomes, at once, a matter of disturbing a universal order and hierarchy for Graham. As such, despite his apparent antagonism to Ostrog, Graham can never represent a utopian alternative that is based on egalitarianism or unity by inclusion.

In *Sleeper Awakes*, which purely focuses on the urban space of the 22nd century, (first) nature serves as an almost absent signifier. Though the narrative starts in Boscastle, a rural settlement in Cornwall, it immediately shifts to the claustrophobic atmosphere of a futuristic London. However, the narrative's restriction to the urban space cannot be construed as the freedom of nature from any human intervention. The abovementioned relations of domination of human beings by other human beings is a symptom of domination of nature by human beings. Neither the Council nor Ostrog exempts the ecosystem of the countryside from their domain of influence, nor do they deem nature *terra incogita.* Except for the scene in which Graham's flight experience is shown, the narrator does not relate any information on the countryside of 22nd century England. Moreover, Graham's flight and the other aerial views are diversions arranged by Ostrog that render the ground level no more than a spectacle, leaving both the social and ecological predicaments unnoticed for Graham. However, some details in

the text indicate a mechanism of domination on nature that resembles the one established over human beings. The first one is as follows:

> And all over the countryside, he knew, […] cottages, churches, inns and farmhouses had nestled among their trees, wind-wheels […] cast their whirling shadows and stored incessantly the energy that flowed away incessantly through all the arteries of the city. And underneath these wandered the countless flocks and herds of the British Food Trust, his property, with their lonely guards and keepers. (2005, p. 125)

Though the rural settlements of Britain were not politically decentralized in the 19th century, the depiction of the 19th century countryside above implies a certain degree of self-sufficiency with their institutions of culture, entertainment, and production. Secondly, though the *subordination* of the countryside to the city was already underway during Graham's period, the social and economic activities carried out in these settlements were for the continuity of these communities, not only for the accommodation of the growing needs of the cities. What is equally significant in the quotation above is the use of the verb "nestle" which refers to the way of being of the social institutions in the countryside. Having the connotations of comfort and protection, this verb implies a high level of interdependence and symbiosis between the social institutions and nature. These settlements, of course, are not to be viewed as the pre-literate communities that Murray Bookchin idealizes in his ecological theory; yet when compared to the futuristic version of London, they are, in Bookchin's words, "neither above nature nor below it but *within* it" (1982, p. 5). According to environmentalist and microbiologist René Dubos, "[t]here are throughout the living world countless types of symbiotic associations, in which both partners derive advantage from their nutritional complementariness and often require each other's presence to complete their development" (1965, p. 91). From a social ecological perspective, it is a fallacy to restrict such mutual relations to the 'first nature,' excluding the 'second nature' as if it were a totally separate realm. Regardless of their relative ecological propriety compared to the other means of energy production, the installation of the wind wheels in the countryside, depopulating these regions and putting them into the service of corporate capitalism in the form of food industry, merely reduce the countryside to be subservient to the cities, which establishes a parasitic relation between them. This parasitic relation can saliently be observed within the boundaries of the future London, too. The narrator states that "[t]he Thames, too, made no fall and gleam of silver to break the wilderness of the city; the thirsty water mains drank up every drop of its waters before they reached the wall" (2005, p. 126). Evidently, the centralization process that works against the regionalist outlook pushes the limits of nature. Second nature is no more 'nestled' in the first one, but, as the strong imagery of exploitation suggests in the above given example, it has a type of existence in defiance of first nature.

In addition to the diminishing level of regionalism, the countryside is subjected to biological domination through agricultural practices that aim to maximize material profit. Though Graham himself is not an eye-witness to such practices, the narrator delineates the agricultural economy of the country as follows:

> [N]early all the towns in the country and almost all the villages disappeared. Here and there only, he understood, a gigantic hotel-like edifice stood amid square miles of some single cultivation and preserved the name of a town- as Bournemouth, Wareham or Swanage. (2005, pp. 126- 127)

The agricultural practice that is based on 'single cultivation' is inherent in the plantations which were extensively used by the Europeans, especially in their colonies. As it were, the political imperialism and domination are supplemented by biological imperialism that boosts the profits of the colonizers. What is problematic about these plantations is that they are utterly detrimental to the biodiversity in a region, for it is a system relying on monoculture. Serpil Oppermann states that the plantations, amongst many other biological interventions,

severely altered the ecological balance in the New World (2007, p. 182). The Council's and Ostrog's administration simply introduce colonial practices both on the people and nature through means that disregard any kind of diversity. To put it in another way, unity by suppression in the social sphere for the sake of political stability is in parallel with unity by suppression in the biological sphere for the sake of economic benefits.

Furthermore, the architecture of the 22nd century countryside in the above-given quotation is diametrically opposed to the one depicting the 19th century rural space. The previous quotation is marked by the diversity of social institutions that may facilitate a regionalist perspective; yet this one foregrounds an architectural, and thus, a social uniformity, which implies mere economic functionalism. Moreover, the metaphor of "hotel" further enhances the discrepancy between the old rural settlements and the new ones. The hotel-like buildings evidently accommodate the workers who toil in these fields. While the current buildings have the implication of transience of those who live and work there, the former buildings hint at a high level of embeddedness of those people in the region. The difference between the two types of settlements highlights the loss of a mentality that regards the flourishing of people heavily tied to the flourishing of land.

Conclusion

Today, in an age of globalization in which local allegiances disappear and corporate capitalism has ever-growing formative power, *The Sleeper Awakes* sustains its relevance to social as well as ecological issues to the same degree it did in the late Victorian Age. As it has been demonstrated in this paper, the novel is not only a premonition about the possible social oppression in the future, but also an extrapolation on the human-nature relationship in which humanity is entirely alienated from nature, and nature is subordinated to the economic interests of an oligarchy. What makes the novel essential and exemplary from a social ecological perspective is that it manifests the interrelatedness of the social structures and the state of nature in diverse ways. Firstly, the centralization of the population within a purely urban space, whose architecture cements hierarchies, serves to the disengagement of second nature from first nature. The rural settlements, where social life is governed through cycles and mechanisms of first nature, are eliminated in an attempt to preclude any communitarian politics. Secondly, the disengagement between first and second nature is not a random one, but is a result of political deliberation that, for its self-preservation, ignores and obscures ecological interdependencies. The head of the world government in the novel works through an instrumental reason that leaves no space for the recognition of these interdependencies. Moreover, it fallaciously interprets the mechanism of first nature to justify the inequalities imposed on second nature. Thirdly, the element of diversity is removed from both social and ecological spheres through a suppressive mechanism. Since the admission of the need for diversity would endanger the hierarchical social structures, neither the Council nor Ostrog jeopardizes the uniformity both in nature and society. To sum up, *The Sleeper Awakes* testifies to the ways in which nature and social politics penetrate into each other in the utopian and dystopian projections of the future.

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