HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

SCIENTIFIC HYPOTHESIS AND NARRATIVE EXPERIMENT AS MECHANISMS OF FANTASTIC REALITY IN XOJAKBAR SHAYKHOV AND H. G. WELLS

Kenjayeva Lobar
Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23010844

Abstract: The article analyzes the role of scientific hypothesis and narrative experiment in the construction of fantastic reality in the works of Xojakbar Shaykhov and H. G. Wells. The central argument is that both authors transform a scientific assumption into a narrative system, but they do so with different cultural and aesthetic accents. Wells typically radicalizes one speculative premise and follows its social, biological, or philosophical consequences. Shaykhov adapts the logic of scientific imagination to Uzbek literary discourse by connecting technological novelty with education, ethical responsibility, and a belief in the constructive potential of knowledge. The article demonstrates that the scientific hypothesis in fantastic literature functions not merely as a plot device but as a discourse-forming principle.

Keywords: scientific hypothesis, narrative experiment, fantastic reality, Xojakbar Shaykhov, H. G. Wells, science fiction poetics, literary modeling

Introduction

The comparative study of Xojakbar Shaykhov and H. G. Wells makes it possible to observe how fantastic reality is constructed in two different literary and cultural systems. Wells represents the English and European scientific-romance tradition, where the fantastic frequently grows out of a rational experiment, technological speculation, and the anxiety of modern civilization. Shaykhov, one of the important names of Uzbek science fiction, develops the fantastic within a different cultural horizon, connecting scientific imagination with ethical responsibility, social education, and a humanistic view of progress. In both cases, the fantastic is not a decorative element. It is a special model of reality through which literature tests the limits of knowledge, human will, social order, and moral choice. This article concentrates on one specific mechanism: the transformation of scientific hypothesis into narrative experiment. A hypothesis becomes literary when it is not only explained but dramatized. The writer asks: what would happen if this scientific possibility became real? The answer is given not by an abstract argument but by plot, character, conflict, and discourse.

From a discourse-analytical perspective, the fantastic text functions by negotiating between credibility and impossibility. If the text becomes too realistic, the speculative element loses power; if it becomes completely arbitrary, the reader loses the sense of meaningful connection with reality. Wells and Shaykhov both maintain this balance through internal consistency. Their invented situations are extraordinary, but once the initial premise is accepted, events follow a recognizable logic of cause and effect. This internal logic is essential because it transforms imagination into a model rather than a random dream.

Another important point is the role of the reader. Fantastic discourse requires an active reader who compares the represented world with empirical reality. The reader notices similarities, differences, projections, and warnings. In this process, the fantastic becomes a comparative structure. Wells encourages the reader to compare Victorian civilization with its possible degeneration or defeat.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Shaykhov encourages the reader to compare the present with a scientifically and morally improved future. In both cases, reading becomes an act of interpretation directed toward the real world.

Scientific hypothesis as the nucleus of the plot

In science fiction the hypothesis functions as the nucleus of the plot. Wells is a classic master of this method. The Time Machine begins with a conceptual challenge to ordinary temporality: if time is a dimension, it may be possible to travel through it. The Invisible Man begins from the physical possibility of optical transparency. The Island of Doctor Moreau is built on biological manipulation. The War of the Worlds imagines an encounter between humanity and a technologically superior extraterrestrial force. In each case, Wells does not decorate a realistic story with fantastic details. He allows the hypothesis to generate the entire narrative structure. Characters, conflicts, settings, and ethical problems all develop from the initial speculative assumption. Shaykhov follows a related but culturally modified principle. His fantastic plots also grow from scientific imagination, but the hypothesis is frequently connected with the educational function of literature. Scientific possibility becomes a means of discussing future society, human duty, and the formation of responsible consciousness.

The cultural difference between the two authors should not be understood as a simple opposition between West and East. Rather, it shows how one genre can be adapted to different literary tasks. Wells uses the scientific romance to question imperial confidence, social inequality, biological optimism, and the myth of rational control. Shaykhov uses science fiction to develop the educational potential of speculative imagination in Uzbek literature. The genre is therefore flexible: it can become satire, warning, philosophical parable, social projection, or moral instruction.

The comparative approach also reveals that fantastic reality is built through repetition of motifs: journey, experiment, encounter, transformation, discovery, and return. These motifs give structure to the unknown. They guide the reader from ordinary reality toward an extraordinary situation and then back toward reflection. The return is especially important because the value of the fantastic is realized when the reader reconsiders ordinary reality after contact with the speculative world.

Narrative experiment and causal expansion

The mechanism of narrative experiment can be described as causal expansion. The writer introduces one unusual element and then observes how reality changes under its influence. Wells is especially consistent in this respect. Invisibility does not remain a wonder; it becomes a social and psychological experiment. The invisible man discovers that freedom from visibility does not liberate him morally. On the contrary, it removes social restraint and reveals the destructive potential of egocentric intelligence. Time travel does not simply entertain the reader with future scenes; it tests ideas of progress, evolution, and class division. The Martian invasion does not merely create adventure; it experiments with imperial power by reversing the position of observer and victim. Shaykhov's narrative experiments are often less pessimistic but equally dependent on causal logic. His scientific novelties are tested by human relations. The experiment asks whether knowledge will strengthen humanity or separate it from ethical responsibility.

In both authors, the fantastic has a strong epistemological dimension. It asks how human beings know the world and what happens when their knowledge becomes insufficient. Wells dramatizes the limits of observation and reason when characters face invisible power, alien technology, or deep time. Shaykhov similarly uses the unknown to expand intellectual curiosity, but he often frames knowledge

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

as a collective and ethical value. Thus, the fantastic is connected not only with invention but also with the discipline of understanding.

The relevance of these writers today lies in the fact that modern society continues to live under the pressure of technological acceleration. Artificial intelligence, biotechnology, space exploration, ecological crisis, and digital transformation make the questions raised by fantastic literature more urgent. Wells helps readers understand the dangers of uncontrolled power; Shaykhov helps readers remember the need for humanistic direction. Their works therefore remain useful for contemporary literary criticism and for broader cultural reflection.

The language of science and the language of wonder

A major stylistic mechanism in both authors is the combination of scientific language with the language of wonder. Wells often writes as if the impossible event were being reported by a disciplined observer. Technical explanation, measurement, classification, and rational commentary create the illusion of reliability. However, the same discourse produces wonder because the explained object exceeds normal experience. This tension between explanation and amazement is central to Wells's poetics. Shaykhov also uses scientific discourse, but his style tends to humanize the technical. Scientific language is not only a sign of modernity; it is connected with the dream of enlightenment and with the social value of knowledge. This means that in Shaykhov's literary discourse science is often represented as a path to moral improvement. The fantastic object is therefore placed between two registers: cognitive curiosity and ethical instruction.

From a discourse-analytical perspective, the fantastic text functions by negotiating between credibility and impossibility. If the text becomes too realistic, the speculative element loses power; if it becomes completely arbitrary, the reader loses the sense of meaningful connection with reality. Wells and Shaykhov both maintain this balance through internal consistency. Their invented situations are extraordinary, but once the initial premise is accepted, events follow a recognizable logic of cause and effect. This internal logic is essential because it transforms imagination into a model rather than a random dream.

Another important point is the role of the reader. Fantastic discourse requires an active reader who compares the represented world with empirical reality. The reader notices similarities, differences, projections, and warnings. In this process, the fantastic becomes a comparative structure. Wells encourages the reader to compare Victorian civilization with its possible degeneration or defeat. Shaykhov encourages the reader to compare the present with a scientifically and morally improved future. In both cases, reading becomes an act of interpretation directed toward the real world.

Characters as participants in the experiment

Characters in fantastic discourse are not ordinary psychological figures only. They are participants in a narrative experiment. Wells's protagonists often embody a one-sided intellectual force. Griffin in The Invisible Man is brilliant but morally deformed. Moreau is scientifically ambitious but ethically monstrous. The Time Traveller is curious and rational, yet his knowledge is limited by the strangeness of the future. Such characters show that intelligence without wisdom can produce catastrophe. Shaykhov's characters, by contrast, more often represent the possibility of harmonizing knowledge and moral responsibility. They are tested by extraordinary situations, but the test aims to reveal the constructive qualities of the human being: courage, solidarity, curiosity, and conscience. This difference is not accidental. It reflects the broader ideological orientation of each

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

author's cultural context. Wells writes during the crisis of Victorian confidence in progress; Shaykhov writes within a tradition where science fiction also served educational and future-oriented purposes.

The cultural difference between the two authors should not be understood as a simple opposition between West and East. Rather, it shows how one genre can be adapted to different literary tasks. Wells uses the scientific romance to question imperial confidence, social inequality, biological optimism, and the myth of rational control. Shaykhov uses science fiction to develop the educational potential of speculative imagination in Uzbek literature. The genre is therefore flexible: it can become satire, warning, philosophical parable, social projection, or moral instruction.

The comparative approach also reveals that fantastic reality is built through repetition of motifs: journey, experiment, encounter, transformation, discovery, and return. These motifs give structure to the unknown. They guide the reader from ordinary reality toward an extraordinary situation and then back toward reflection. The return is especially important because the value of the fantastic is realized when the reader reconsiders ordinary reality after contact with the speculative world.

The philosophical result of the experiment

The scientific hypothesis in fantastic literature usually leads to a philosophical result. Wells questions the optimistic myth of automatic progress. The future may not be better; science may not civilize the human being; technology may become an instrument of domination. His narrative experiments reveal the instability of modern assumptions. Shaykhov's philosophical result is more constructive. He does not deny danger, but he tends to emphasize the moral regulation of knowledge. Scientific imagination becomes meaningful when it is connected with humanism. Therefore, the fantastic in Shaykhov can be understood as a discourse of responsibility. It tells the reader that the future is not only invented by machines or discoveries; it is shaped by ethical decisions.

In both authors, the fantastic has a strong epistemological dimension. It asks how human beings know the world and what happens when their knowledge becomes insufficient. Wells dramatizes the limits of observation and reason when characters face invisible power, alien technology, or deep time. Shaykhov similarly uses the unknown to expand intellectual curiosity, but he often frames knowledge as a collective and ethical value. Thus, the fantastic is connected not only with invention but also with the discipline of understanding.

The relevance of these writers today lies in the fact that modern society continues to live under the pressure of technological acceleration. Artificial intelligence, biotechnology, space exploration, ecological crisis, and digital transformation make the questions raised by fantastic literature more urgent. Wells helps readers understand the dangers of uncontrolled power; Shaykhov helps readers remember the need for humanistic direction. Their works therefore remain useful for contemporary literary criticism and for broader cultural reflection.

Conclusion

Scientific hypothesis and narrative experiment are central mechanisms in the modeling of fantastic reality. Wells transforms the hypothesis into a radical test of civilization, exposing the dangers of power, evolution, and technological arrogance. Shaykhov transforms scientific imagination into a humanistic model of future-oriented consciousness. Both writers show that the fantastic is not arbitrary invention. It is a disciplined literary experiment in which one altered condition allows reality to be reinterpreted. The comparison demonstrates that fantastic discourse depends on the balance between rational explanation and imaginative projection, between scientific possibility and moral consequence.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

References

1. Suvin, D. (1979). Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre. Yale University Press.
2. Todorov, T. (1975). The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre. Cornell University Press.
3. Wells, H. G. (1895). The Time Machine. London: William Heinemann.
4. Wells, H. G. (1896). The Island of Doctor Moreau. London: William Heinemann.
5. Wells, H. G. (1897). The Invisible Man. London: C. Arthur Pearson.
6. Wells, H. G. (1898). The War of the Worlds. London: William Heinemann.
7. Rabkin, E. S. (1976). The Fantastic in Literature. Princeton University Press.
8. Jameson, F. (2005). Archaeologies of the Future. Verso.
9. Parrinder, P. (1995). Shadows of the Future: H. G. Wells, Science Fiction, and Prophecy. Syracuse University Press.
10. Roberts, A. (2016). The History of Science Fiction. Palgrave Macmillan.
11. Shaykhov, X. Selected science-fiction prose and stories. Tashkent editions.
12. Sattorova, G. (2020). Features fantasy Kenzaburo Oe. Results of Scientific Research in the Conditions of Pandemic, 1(03), 57-60.