

Invisibility as Power: Forms, Reactions, and Exploitation in H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*

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Abstract

Exploitation involves treating someone unfairly for personal gain or utilizing something to gain an advantage. This study explores the theme of exploitation in H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* through a marxist literary lens, focusing on three main findings: Griffin's exploitation of others through dehumanization and instrumentalization of labor, his dual role as both a victim and an agent of exploitation, and the social reactions to his actions, particularly in the forms of fear and resistance. Using a qualitative descriptive method, this study chose selected excerpts and interpreted them within the framework of Marxist theory. This study reveals Griffin as both a cruel exploiter and an outcome of the system he opposes by examining Griffin's complicated duality, how his experiences of marginalization, rejection, and isolation influence his exploitative actions. Additionally, this study illustrates how society around Griffin, which was dominated by terror at first but gradually responds with resistance, illustrating how systemic threats can lead to the creation of collective action. This insights deepen the comprehension of Wells' social critique, especially his observation on alienation, capitalist exploitation, and the power structures that shape today's society.

Keywords: *Exploitation, Dehumanization, Instrumentalization of Labor, Oppression, Fear, Resistance, Capitalism, The Invisible Man, H.G. Wells*

INTRODUCTION

H.G. Wells or Herbert George Wells was an English novelist, journalist, sociologist, and historian who was born on 21st September 1866, in Kent, England and died on 13th August 1946 in London. Wells is best known for his science fiction novels as *The Time Machine* and *The War of the Worlds*. Other works of his is such comic novel as *Tono Bungay* and *The History of Mr. Polly*. (Nicholson, N, C. 2023)

In the late 19th century, when H.G. Wells write the novel *The Invisible Man*, there were significant political, social and economic changes. The development of industrial capitalism

resulting in exploitation and class divides became major topics. Power relationships and the quest for domination are central to these socio-political issues.

This study will mainly focus on the Marxist analysis of exploitation in H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*, relating to the exploitation between the characters. The main focus of this study is on the main character, the invisible man, Griffin. The analysis rummages through his motives, actions, and interactions with other characters to distinguish the reflection of the exploitation. This study examines power dynamics within the context of Marxist theories, focusing attention on exploitation as the main theme. This study focuses on identifying and interpreting examples of exploitation within the narrative.

The purpose of this study is to analyse exploitation in the novel *The Invisible Man* by H.G. Wells, through an analysis of the main character, Griffin, and his interaction with his environment and the society around him. Giving more attention to how Griffin dehumanizes individuals and treats them as mere tools to achieve his personal goals, reflecting the instrumentalization of labor. At the same time, this study explores the dual role Griffin lived in, as both a victim and an agent of exploitation, because of his experience of social isolation, economic struggle, and rejection he faced, which made him get his exploitative behaviour. In addition, this study also looks into the social response to Griffin, such as fear and resistance, as a counter to the threat Griffin poses to the established order and class structure. Through this analysis, this study aims to reveal how Wells uses his science fiction genre novel to critique deeper issues related to power, inequality, and social alienation.

There are several journals that are relevant to the issue and to the novel that is used in this study. The first one is an article that was written in June 2022 by Jumino Suhadi et al entitled *Science and Society: The Impact of Science Abuse on Social Life in Well's The Invisible Man*. This article explores the relationship between science and society in *The Invisible Man* and elaborates on the impact of science abuse on social life (Suhadi, J. et al., 2022) The analysis of this connection infers two main points regarding the impact of science abuse on social life in the novel (1) Social Rejection and (2) Hunted by Society. This article emphasizes the impact of science abuse on social life, which will be a great example of raising awareness of science applications and their impact on society.

The second article also used the same novel of H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*. Makatita, Arafah and Abbas (2022) wrote this article entitled *The Case of Science Abuse: Science for Crime in Wells' The Invisible Man*. This article explores the scientific abuse and the crimes as reflected in *The Invisible Man*, which elaborates on how scientific discovery is corrupted by harmful intentions and leads to disaster for the inventor (Makatita, F.P, et al., 2022). This study uses qualitative research or exploratory research using the descriptive method. This article concludes that science is very versatile, so it needs guidance from other sources. Science may facilitate one's to steal, abuse, kill or do any crimes just like Griffin, the main character in the novel who used the benefit of his knowledge for harmful intentions and abused it to commit crimes such as robbery, violation, terrorization, and murder (Makatita, F.P, et al., 2022).

This study is significant because it highlights the social-political aspect that is often overlooked in *The Invisible Man* novel. This study enriches the literature criticism with its description and analysis of the theme of exploitation by exploring Griffin's complex character

and the social environment around him. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how literature reflects and critiques social inequality and class struggle. Furthermore, this study offers valuable insights for scholars or students who are interested in Marxist theory, Victorian literature, and the intersection between science and fiction and social commentary. In the end, this study highlights the relevance of the novel *The Invisible Man* by H.G. Wells in the discussion of human nature, morality, and the impact of systemic exploitation on society.

H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* is widely recognized for its contribution to the science fiction genre, particularly for its exploration of invisibility as both a scientific and psychological concept. However, this focus has led to a critical gap in literary studies, especially in terms of analyzing the theme of exploitation depicted in the novel. Previous studies have largely emphasized Griffin's scientific brilliance and his fall into madness, or highlighted the horror elements of the narrative, while giving little attention to the socio-economic and political dimensions that emerge from his actions and experiences.

More specifically, there has been relatively little scholarly discussion on the character of Griffin as both a victim and an agent of exploitation, and how this duality reflects broader themes such as class struggle, alienation, and power dynamics within Victorian society as portrayed in *The Invisible Man*. Furthermore, the social reaction to Griffin, marked by fear and resistance, has not been fully analyzed as a response to the threat of exploitation and disruption of social hierarchies.

This study aims to address this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the theme of exploitation in *The Invisible Man*, focusing particularly on the complex role of Griffin and society's response to his presence. In doing so, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the novel's socio-political critique.

METHODS

In this study, the researcher used the qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative methods involve the analysis of qualitative data – that is, non-numerical data such as words, images, behaviors and observable phenomena. Rather than focusing on quantities, statistics, or numbers, qualitative methods interpret descriptive data gathered from sources like interviews, observations, documents, audio and video to characterize states, events, or situations in terms of linguistic expressions, explanations, and interpretations. The goal of qualitative analysis is to understand the meaning or nature of something based on verbal accounts, visual depictions, depictions of behavior, or other observable characteristics as opposed to measurements, frequencies, or other quantitative assessments. Through careful examination of qualitative sources of information, researchers seek to provide rich descriptive explanations of human experience, systems, or conditions (Creswell, W. J. 2014).

RESULTS

1. *Exploitation of others by Griffin*
 - a. *Dehumanization*

The Invisible Man, a novel written by H.G. Wells, shows a lot of signs of dehumanization. One of the signs is reflected in the excerpt below.

"Ow!" he said. He rose stiffly in his seat. His face was eloquent of physical suffering. "Wow!" he said. "What's up?" said the mariner, concerned.

"Toothache," said Mr. Marvel, and put his hand to his ear. He caught hold of his books. "I must be getting on, I think," he said. He edged in a curious way along the seat away from his interlocutor. "But you was just a-going to tell me about this here Invisible Man!" protested the mariner. Mr. Marvel seemed to consult with himself. "Hoax," said a Voice. "It's a hoax," said Mr. Marvel.

"But it's in the paper," said the mariner.

"Hoax all the same," said Marvel. "I know the chap that started the lie. There ain't no Invisible Man whatsoever—Blimey." (Wells, 1897, p. 92)

b. *Intrumentalization of labor*

In the novel *The Invisible Man*, the theme of intrumentalization of labor is shown from the beginning of the novel when Griffin, take money from his own father to support his experiment.

"And after three years of secrecy and exasperation, I found that to complete it was imposible—impossible."

"How?" asked Kemp.

"Money." said the Invisible Man, and went again to stare out of the window. He turned around abruptly. "I robbed the old man—robbed my father.

"The money was not his, and he shot himself." (Wells, 1897, p. 128)

2. *Griffin as both a victim and an agent of exploitation*

In the novel *The Invisible Man*, the main character, Griffin, serves as both victim and agent of exploitation.

a. *Griffin as a victim of exploitation*

One of the signs of Griffin as a victim of exploitation is shown when Griffin is violently attacked by the angry crowd, showing that despite his invisible ability, he is still physically weak and gets fully overpowered. The assault's brutality includes being hit repeatedly, pinned down, and then assaulted with a spade.

He was hit hard under the ear, and went reeling, trying to face round towards his unseen antagonist. He just managed to keep his feet, and he struck a vain counter in the air. Then he was hit again under the jaw, and sprawled headlong on the ground. In another moment a knee compressed his diaphragm, and a couple of eager hands gripped his throat, but the grip of one was weaker than the other; he grasped the wrists, heard a cry of pain from his assailant, and

then the spade of the navvy came whirling through the air above him, and struck something with a dull thud. He felt a drop of moisture on his face. (Wells, 1897, p. 202)

Another example that shows Griffin as a victim of exploitation in the novel *The Invisible Man* is when Griffin is on the run evading a crowd that is pursuing him.

"Twice I doubled round corners, thrice I crossed the road and came back upon my tracks, and then, as my feet grew hot and dry, the damp impressions began to fade. At last I had a breathing space and rubbed my feet clean with my hands, and so got away altogether. The last I saw of the chase was a little group of a dozen people perhaps, studying with infinite perplexity a slowly drying footprint that had resulted from a puddle in Tavistock Square, a footprint as isolated and incomprehensible to them as Crusoe's solitary discovery (Wells, 1897, p. 148)

b. Griffin as an agent of exploitation

One of the many signs of Griffin being the agent of exploitation shows in the scene where Griffin tells Dr. Kemp about his scheme for launching a "Reign of Terror". He suggests using his invisibility to seize control of a town, such as Burdock, by giving secret commands and killing anyone who defies or opposes them. He views this as strategic and essential for building his authority. He views himself as the enforcer of an unseen tyranny and fear as a valid instrument of government.

"Not wanton killing, but a judicious slaying. The point is, they know there is an Invisible Man—as well as we know there is an Invisible Man. And that Invisible Man, Kemp, must now establish a Reign of Terror. Yes; no doubt it's startling. But I mean it. A Reign of Terror. He must take some town like your Burdock and terrify and dominate it. He must issue his orders. He can do that in a thousand ways—scraps of paper thrust under doors would suffice. And all who disobey his orders he must kill, and kill all who would defend them." (Wells, 1897, p. 174)

Another example of how Griffin acts as an agent of exploitation is when Griffin has fully converted to a violent and authoritarian mentality. Declaring that Dr. Kemp has betrayed him, he plans to publicly execute him in order to start a "Reign of Terror". He issues a warning to the people not to assist Kemp, saying that everyone who help will be murdered.

"...The first day there will be one execution for the sake of example—a man named Kemp. Death starts for him to-day. He may lock himself away, hide himself away, get guards about him, put on armour if he likes—Death, the unseen Death, is coming. Let him take precautions; it will impress my people."

Death starts from the pillar box by midday. The letter will fall in as the postman comes along, then off! The game begins. Death starts. Help him not, my people, lest Death fall upon you also. Today Kemp is to die." (Wells, 1897, p. 186)

3. *Social reaction to Griffin's action: Fear and Resistance*

a. *Fear*

One of the scenes that shows fear as the social reaction to Griffin's exploitation is where the townspeople see Griffin dramatically reveal his invisibility for the first time. The terrifying sight of "nothingness" is what Mrs. Hall and the others saw when Griffin takes off his disguise. He is confirmed to be completely invisible when his bandage and wig fly off. Panic under fear is the crowd's reaction. In their haste to flee the eerie spectacle, the other trip over each other as Mrs. Hall cries and flees. Griffin, on the other hand, is yelling incoherently, possibly in an attempt to clarify or establish authority, but his bizarre and menacing look overwhelms any words.

It was worse than anything. Mrs. Hall, standing open-mouthed and horror-struck, shrieked at what she saw, and made for the door of the house. Everyone began to move. They were prepared for scars, disfigurements, tangible horrors, but nothing! The bandages and false hair flew across the passage into the bar, making a hobbledehoy jump to avoid them. Everyone tumbled on everyone else down the steps. For the man who stood there shouting some incoherent explanation, was a solid gesticulating figure up to the coat-collar of him, and then—nothingness, no visible thing at all! (Wells, 1897, p. 52)

Another scene showing fear towards Griffin is when the town's residents realize the invisible man is close by, and fear breaks out. A dog first detects his presence, then there are odd sounds and a terrifying burst of air. People lock their doors in terror as they scream, flee, and quickly hide inside their houses. His arrival is quickly reported, causing confusion and demonstrating the townspeople's intense fear of this invisible danger.

And then presently, far up the hill, a dog playing in the road yelped and ran under a gate, and as they still wondered something—a wind—a pad, pad, pad,— a sound like a panting breathing, rushed by.

People screamed. People sprang off the pavement: It passed in shouts, it passed by instinct down the hill. They were shouting in the street before Marvel was halfway there. They were bolting into houses and slamming the doors behind them, with the news. He heard it and made one last desperate spurt. Fear came striding by, rushed ahead of him, and in a moment had seized the town.

"The Invisible Man is coming! The Invisible Man!" (Wells, 1897, p. 98)

b. Resistance

There are a lot of scenes in the novel that show people's resistance against Griffin's oppression. One of them is when Marvel asks for help from the police, asking them to save him from Griffin, who said he would kill him.

"Coming!" he bawled, his voice shrieking with terror. *"He's coming. The Visible Man! After me! For Gawd's sake! 'Elp! 'Elp! 'Elp!"*

"Shut the doors," said the policeman. *"Who's coming? What's the row?"* He went to the door, released the strap, and it slammed. The American closed the other door.

"Lemme go inside," said Marvel, staggering and weeping, but still clutching the books. *"Lemme go inside. Lock me in—somewhere. I tell you he's after me. I give him the slip. He said he'd kill me and he will."*

"You're safe," said the man with the black beard. *"The door's shut. What's it all about?"* (Wells, 1897, p. 100)

Another scene that shows resistance towards Griffin is at the last chapter. It is where finally, Griffin was killed by the townspeople after all he did to them.

When at last the crowd made way for Kemp to stand erect, there lay, naked and pitiful on the ground, the bruised and broken body of a young man about thirty. His hair and brow were white—not grey with age, but white with the whiteness of albinism—and his eyes were like garnets. His hands were clenched, his eyes wide open, and his expression was one of anger and dismay. (Wells, 1897, p. 205)

After the bloody battle, the townspeople finally apprehended and murdered Griffin, the invisible man. After he dies, his invisibility fades, and he is once more seen, exposing a youthful, white-haired, garnet-eyed man. He may have been frustrated by his failure or the social rejection he experienced, as seen by his rejection of dismay and rage. Dr. Kemp, who has resisted Griffin's reign of terror, is able to view the body when the crowd parts. Griffin's destructive journey comes to a stop at this point, metaphorically illustrating how society, which has previously been immobilized by fear, gradually opposes and overcomes the threat of untamed authority.

DISCUSSION

This study will mainly focus on the Marxist analysis of exploitation in H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*, relating to the exploitation between the characters. The main focus of this study is on the main character, the invisible man, Griffin. Focusing on how Griffin exploits others,

especially in the form of dehumanization and instrumentalization of labor, Griffin's role as both victim and agent of exploitation, also the society's reaction to Griffin's exploitation.

1. *Exploitation of others by Griffin*

Exploitation involves treating someone unfairly for personal gain or utilizing something to gain an advantage. Rivkin and Ryan said in their books said that the very form of the catch is that the labor force is a peculiar commodity, the use of labor itself produces a certain surplus-value, and it is surplus over the value of the labor force itself which appropriated by the capitalist (Rivkin, J & Ryan, M. 2017).

In the book *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Karl Marx, even though it is not written explicitly, Karl also addresses the theme of dehumanization and internalization of labor. These two ideas are delivered implicitly through the description of capitalism. In capitalism, the worker is no longer treated as a human being but seen as a mere tool (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848.). This can be seen as a clear case of dehumanization where the worker's value is tied only to productivity. In the article written by Nick Haslam and Michelle Stratemeyer, they stated that dehumanization is an act of perceiving or treating people as if they are less than human (Haslam, N., & Stratemeyer, M. 2016). According to Matthew L. Stanley, in his article entitled *Dissociations between animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization in the context of labor exploitation*, he stated that because of dehumanization is so common in our daily lives, it is likely that dehumanization processed lead to the exploitation of certain workers (Stanley, M. L., & Kay, A. C. 2024).

Besides dehumanization, one of exploitation forms is instrumentalization of labour. In their article, Braekkan and Sowa stated that exploitation by economic necessity can appear as exploitation caused by conditions where workers feel obligated to offer their labour because they must rely on the market to acquire what they require (Braekkan, K. F., & Sowa, V. T. 2015).

As Marx said in *Manifesto of Communist Party* in the chapter Bourgeois and Proletarians, that a person's value is no longer seen by their inherent characteristic, such as talent or character, but by their economic value. Person seen from what they can sell, produce or profit from (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848.). According to the article written by Marnie Holborow, in the article entitled *Language, Commodification and Labor: The Relevance of Marx*, that action known as commodification of human life means that everything, including a person, is reduced to an economic function (Holborow, M. 2018).

In the article entitled *Imperialism, Colonialism, and Racism in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness: A Postcolonial Approach*, it is said that Marlow and Kurtz call the natives 'non-human', meaning they didn't see the natives as humans (Hasan, M. et al. 2020) Even worse, with they calling the native 'non-human', the whole of Europe starts to call the native non-human as well. Marlow and Kurtz's actions resulted in them and the whole of Europe exploiting and looting Africa.

The findings found that Griffin, as the main character, shows a lot of signs of exploiting other people in the novel, as found before in the excerpt where Griffin has control over Marvel, Mr Marvel's self-determination or freedom as a human being is stripped away from him, making him become a mere tool for Griffin's goal. Griffin's invisibility controls over Marvel,

which forces Marvel to act against his will, demonstrating the dehumanization effect of power dynamics where a person is manipulated and only seen as a tool to serve their master.

Paul A. Cantor also stated in his analysis that Griffin is an embodiment of ‘pure selfishness’. He continued his pursuit without regard to other people, which reflects the capitalist principle of self-interest (Cantor, P. A. 1999). This point of view corresponds with Marx’s critique of capitalism’s dehumanizing description, where individuals are valued solely for their economic contribution.

Other than dehumanization, the novel *The Invisible Man* also shows signs of exploitation through instrumentalization of labor. In the article entitled *Dissociations between animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization in the context of labor exploitation* stated that subtle forms of labor exploitation keep on with various degrees of public acceptance, even though some especially horrible forms of widely dismissed by the publics as unfair and cruel, such as pressuring employees to work extra hours for no reward, to work in unsafe environment, and to complete undesirable tasks unrelated to their official job duties for no reward (Stanley, M. L., & Kay, A. C. 2024).

One of the quote in the book *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels that imply about instrumentalization of labor “The proletariat... is daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself.” (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848.). Based on that quote, according to them, a worker’s life is under capitalist control outside of the workplace. Workers eventually adopt the dominance of labor as they begin to accept these controls as natural or normal.

Griffin’s scientific experiment was disrupted due to his financial struggles, forcing him to exploit his own family, specifically his father, for financial gain. The death of Griffin’s father highlights dehumanizing effect of a system where a person is seen and valued only for their economic utility. In this aspect, Marx stated in his book that “these labourers, who must sell themselves piece-meal, are a commodity” (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848.). Griffin commodifies his own labor and interest while sacrificing his personal relationship to achieve his goal. His pursuit of scientific progress without ethical consideration reflects the capitalist tendency to prioritize profit over human values. According to Cantor, this acts is a critique of the ways in which people are forced by capitalist society to disregard their moral and familial responsibilities in insatiable pursuit of their own goals and financial success (Cantor, P.A, 1999).

The article entitled *Critique of Ethical Degradation in Wells’ The Invisible Man* written by Bindu Gahatraj stated that Griffin exploits the scientific knowledge he knows for his own benefit, disregarding the effect of his actions on others. This is an ideal example of the decline in morality that happens when human efforts are turned into commodities in a capitalist society (Bindu Gahatraj. 2021). The moral decay that may occur from a system that only values people for their financial contribution is best illustrated by Griffin’s development into a character who takes advantage of others, including his own father, for his own gain. Griffin’s thievery and intimidation, as well as his abuse of scientific knowledge for his own benefit, reflect the capitalist system that puts profit before morality (Suhadi, J.et al., 2022).

2. *Griffin as both a victim and an agent of exploitation*

a. *Griffin as a victim of exploitation*

The book entitled *Handbook of Sex Trafficking* in the chapter Victim Becoming Victimizer written by Sarachaga-Barato, N and L. Walker stated that there's possibility of sex trafficking victims turning into traffickers themselves (Sarachaga-Barato, N., & Walker, L., 2018). It illustrates how long exposure to exploitative situations can normalize these kinds of actions, causing the victims to take on roles that support the exploitation cycle.

It is not unusual for someone to be both a victim of structural exploitation and an abuser who takes advantage of others. Marxist criticism of capitalism is characterized by this seemingly contradictory dichotomy, which shows how oppressive structures may replicate themselves through individuals shaped by those systems. Karl Marx's *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) emphasizes how the bourgeoisie converts individual value into exchange value, forcing people to engage in exploitative practices in order to thrive or survive under capitalism. Derya Güler Aydın (2010) in his article examine the alienation of labor caused by capitalist institutions, which reduce people to only parts in an indifferent system and transform work into a commodity. In order to survive, exploitation felt by people forces them to engage in exploitative behaviors, making those people participants of the exact system that takes advantage of them.

Article entitled *Revelation and the Unseen in H.G. Wells's The Invisible Man*, written by Tarryn Handcock, explores about Griffin's journey into moral decay, emphasizing both his loneliness and the social forces that lead to his demise. The research highlights how Griffin exploits others as a result of the scientific community's lack of support and acknowledgement of Griffin's work, showing the dehumanizing consequences of a system that values people only for their financial contributions. In those article Handcock stated Griffin has no regret for his father's passing and doesn't care about other people's pain; Griffin thinks that the various beating, break-ins, arson, and other immoral activities he does that have led him to this point is necessary action he had to do which he has been motivated to do so (Handcock, T. 2013).

Marxist view fear as a tool of domination since it allows the system of authority, such as capitalism or Griffin's reign of terror, to continue without question when people are too scared to act or ask questions. In this novel, early resistance is stopped by the townspeople's paralyzing terror. Even though Griffin is an oppressor, he also serves as a victim of exploitation in this novel. Griffin's desperate attempts to avoid arrest in the novel represent his alienation and the undervaluation of his hard work. He became a fugitive despite his scientific genius, his efforts and accomplishments being dismissed as simple abnormalities that society fails to acknowledge and misinterpret. This is in line with Marx's criticism of capitalism's commodification of work, which deprives it of its inherent worth and turns people into instruments of the capitalist system. This can be supported by the article entitled *From Alienation to Fetishism: Marx's Philosophic and Economic Critique of Capitalism*, by Stephen Margheim. The article describe how exchange value surpasses use value in capitalism, causing labor to become separated from human purpose (Margheim, S.P. 2010). This is similar to Griffin's experience, where his scientific works turn into a non-physical trace that isn't related to any social acknowledgement or significance.

Marx stated that capitalism reduces all occupations, including science. It all reduces to mere workers under capitalism to accomplish the bourgeoisie's objectives (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848.). In *The Invisible Man*, Griffin's scientific pursuits are exploited and ultimately brought to an end because they are not recognised for their intellectual worth but rather because they are limited by financial considerations.

The dehumanizing consequences of a society that commodifies labor and ignores the inherent worth of each individual are reflected in his transition into an invisible man and the alienation that follows. In the article entitled *Science and Society: The Impact of Science Abuse on Social Life in Wells' The Invisible Man* discusses about how Griffin's misuse of scientific knowledge has effected society, showing how his action disturb social unity and highlight the perils of unchecked scientific ambition in a capitalist system (Suhadi, J.et al., 2022).

Griffin's physical attack by an invisible force represents a persistent and invisible oppression that people experience under capitalism. Griffin is overpowered by those invisible foes, highlighting his helplessness and weakness, just like workers are controlled by the invisible forces of the market and industrial machines. This is similar to Marx's description of workers becoming alienated and dehumanized as a result of being controlled by the very structures they work for. As stated in the book *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, in the chapter Bourgeois and Proletarians that in addition to being slaves of the bourgeois class and the bourgeois state, the masses of workers packed into the factory are organized like troops. They are also enslaved on a daily and hourly basis by the machine, the overlooker and most importantly, the individual bourgeois manufacturer (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848.).

In the article *The Invisible Man and the Invisible Hand: H.G Wells's Critique of Capitalism* by Paul A. Cantor talk about how that dehumanizing impact of capitalism are reflected in Griffin's transition and later behavior turn into an image for the solitary person who is cut off from society and made into a mere component in a wheel (Cantor, P.A. 1999). Marx's critique of capitalism can be seen through the narration of Griffin's experiences in *The Invisible Man*.

b. Griffin as an agent of exploitation

In the novel, Griffin, the main character, serves as the biggest oppressor. Griffin changes from a dejected scientist to a vicious character who takes advantage of every human vulnerability in order to get power. By stealing from his father, intimidating the villagers, controlling Thomas Marvel and organizing a reign of terror, he systematically uses other people as tools to further his goal. Marx's criticism of capitalist exploitation, in which people are dehumanized and turned into tools in the name of power and financial gain, is reflected in this drop. Paul A. Cantor (1999) said that the worst qualities of homo economicus are "pure selfishness... fixated on his self-interest, devoid of empathy and responsibility" and are displayed by Griffin. Griffin's determination to take advantage of-and even murder-his father for financial gain, according to Cantor, demonstrates how capitalist structures can "destroy traditional values and familial bonds," transforming people into agents of their own dehumanization.

In addition to those, the article entitled *The Political Kinetics of H.G. Wells's Scientific Romances* written by Dongshin Lee, stated that Griffin, the invisible man, literally personifies the invisible power of money and acts in a way that is similar to that of a corrupted capitalist (Lee, D. 2011). This article makes it clear that Griffin uses his invisibility as a weapon rather than just gaining it. His treatment of people and scientific advancement as instruments for private benefit, akin to that of the capitalist elite, supporting Marx's theory that capitalism prioritizes economic dominance over moral restraint. In fact, Griffin's behavior exemplifies this distortion: he prioritizes wealth and power over people.

Rashad Mohammed Moqbel Al Areqih said in his article entitled *A Psychoanalytic Reading of Abdulrazak Gurnah's Gravel Heart* that Hakim and Amir are portrayed by Gurnah as self-centred. No matter how much harm they cause, their only reason they existing is to follow their impulses. Amir ignores the harm to his sister's honour and the disgrace he would cause her, not to mention the breakdown of her family, and sees her sacrifice as something honourable that she must do in order to save his future. His top priority is to secure his social standing as a significant diplomat or ambassador in the future (Al Areqih, R. 2022). How Gurnah portray Hakim and Amir is the same as how Wells portrays Griffin's role as an agent of exploitation. Griffin robbing his own father for his own financial gain to achieve his own goal, causing him to take his own life.

The article entitled *The Case of Science Abuse: Science for Crime in Well's The Invisible Man* elaborates on how scientific discovery is corrupted by harmful intentions and leads to disaster for the inventor. This article stated that science may facilitate one's to steal, abuse, kill, or do any crimes just like Griffin who used his invisibility for harmful intentions and abused it to commit crimes, such as robbery, violation, terrorization, and murder (Makatita, F,P, et al., 2022). Griffin's character completely changes at this point, going from being a victim of society's neglect to an agent of exploitation and dominance who uses his invisibility for aggression and control rather than for liberation. It also demonstrates how far he has departed from moral science and logic, adopting terror and power as the ultimate goal.

This is similar to how capitalists use labor exploitation and repression to stay in power. In line with Marx's criticism of how capitalism corrupts professions for profit, Griffin's use of his scientific discovery for personal gain rather than for the sake of society is an example of how science can be twisted for capitalist purposes. The article entitled *The Degradation of Science under Capitalism* argues that science is commodified by capitalism, which transforms cooperative research into a self-serving endeavor influenced by private gain. It stated that ideas themselves have turned into "intellectual property rights" under capitalism, and this private ownership of information has slowed down the advancement of research (Booth, A. 2014).

Werskey also stated in his article *The Marxist Critique of Capitalist Science: A History in Three Movement?* that this paradigm—science as a tool for capital and power, not for people—is exemplified by Griffin's seclusion, the commercialization of his work, and his contempt for moral and social issues. This article critiques how industrial labor dynamics, where knowledge production is governed by hierarchy and compulsion, are mirrored in scientific practice under capitalism (Werskey, G. 2007). Marx's criticism of capitalism is narratively represented in Griffin's acts in *The Invisible Man*. His transition into an invisible

man and following pursuit of dominance are a reflection of the dehumanizing consequences of a system that puts profit and power before morality.

Other than that, Griffin's proclamation of declaring a "Reign of Terror" shows his transformation from a dejected scientist to a tyrannical leader attempting to control society via violence and terror. This is similar to how capitalists use labor exploitation and repression to stay in power. In line with Marx's criticism of how capitalism corrupts professions for profit, Griffin's use of his scientific discovery for personal gain rather than for the sake of society is an example of how science can be twisted for a capitalist goal. (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848.)

Article *Science Behind the Blinds: Scientist and Society in The Invisible Man* examines Wells' warning that scientific knowledge might cause chaos in society and dominance if it is applied carelessly. Griffin's actions are a prime example of how science has been used to serve tyranny rather than advancement. Griffin's behavior, what more like a capitalist ruler, using his creation to silence opposition and uphold fear-driven control rather than spreading discoveries for group advancement, is supported by this article, which emphasize the societal repercussions of scientific abuse (McLean, S. 2007).

3. Social reaction to Griffin's action: Fear and Resistance

The article *Science and Society: The Impact of Science Abuse on Social Life in Wells' The Invisible Man*, states that the gossip and fear surrounding Griffin are highlighted; it is also stated that from the moment Griffin gained invisibility, he realized the unique edge he had. "My head was already teeming with plans of all the wild and wonderful things I had now impunity to do" This sentence hinted at the undesirable deed Griffin intended to carry out by using his invisibility (Suhadi, J.et al., 2022). This article also noted the increasing tendency towards selfishness and malice. Griffin committed a number of crimes, including murder, robbery, infractions, and terrorism.

Additionally, the same article also shows how Iping's close-knit social dynamics are heightened by suspicion and concern when his invisibility is disrupted, "Like any rural people...the villagers of Iping are tremendously turned off by Griffin's elitism, and his suspicious secrecy...they despise his cold act an individualism," (Suhadi, J.et al., 2022). Marx's theory that the oppressed, when aware of the exploitative power structure, resist collectively is echoed by this collective aversion and eventual resistance, which captures how communities come together and see refuge behind solidarity when confronted with exploitation or disruption.

A strong collective reaction based on resistance and fear is shown in Griffin's invisibility and the terror he eventually inflicts on the village of Iping. The people's responses are not passive as he starts to take advantage of them and hurt them socially, physiologically, and physically. In contrast, they collectively flinch, expose suspicions, stir fear, and finally protect their group, reflecting the larger reaction of communities that face systematic exploitation. Marxist theory holds that capitalistic oppression often results in a collective backlash from the exploited, and this cycle of dread, rejection, and resistance is consistent with that philosophy. This novel shows how the abuse of power causes widespread fear among those impacted. Fortunately, that dread soon transforms into resistance, as everyone joins together to stop Griffin by arranging an observer, constructing traps, and eventually apprehending him.

Tarryn Handcock's article *Revelation and the Unseen in H.G. Wells's The Invisible Man* describe how Griffin becomes a social nuisance that is rejected everywhere, townspeople drew aside as he passed, shutting doors and pulling down blinds (Handcock, T. 2013). This quote captures the dread Griffin's invisibility causes fear that is so deep that even silent gestures like pulling down blinds become a form of defense. Bhavna Baria (2016) also stated that the fear of the unknown, of the invisible force, soon becomes unbearable to the people. This supports the idea that fear is both communal and emotional, spreading like a virus once it gets established.

The ongoing struggle between the opposing classes, which results in societal changes, is highlighted in this quotation from *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848.). When a new, disruptive force appears, the established social order frequently becomes fearful and resists. The locals are shocked by Griffin's abrupt disclosure of his invisibility, which causes confusion and fear. Their response serves as a metaphor for society's apprehension about the unknown and the disruptive force that questions accepted wisdom. Marx's description of the bourgeoisie's fear of the growing proletariat reflects the existing class's concern about the disruption caused by new forces that challenge its hegemony.

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." This sentence from the book *Manifesto of the Communist Party* highlighting the conflict between classes, leading to societal transitions. The emergence of a new, disruptive force often incites fear and resistance among the existing social order (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848.). This is supported by the study by Tarryn Handcock entitled *Revelation and the Unseen in H.G. Wells' The Invisible Man* which explores how Griffin is perceived as an outsider by the community, which causes fear and resistance due to his invisibility and rejection of social norms. He is shunned as a result of his deeds, which tear apart society. The approach draws attention to society's propensity to fear and oppose forces that threaten established order (Handcock, T. 2013).

Another article that supports this argument is an article entitled *Science and Society: The Impact of Science Abuse on Social Life in Wells's The Invisible Man* that examine the public's lack of readiness for Griffin's scientific discoveries, highlighting the anxiety and resistance of society to sudden, unfathomable change. It makes comparisons between the larger issue of society's difficulty adjusting to disruptive innovations and Griffin's invisibility (Suhadi, J.et al., 2022). In *The Invisible Man*, fear paralyses the community at first, but resistance soon overcomes that paralysis. The locals go from panic to active defence as Griffin's invisible reign of terror intensifies, barring doors, arming themselves, setting up watches, and pursuing the invisible threat. This change reflects a shared determination not to stand idly by when authority is abused and exploited.

Bhavna Baria stated in his article on how the villagers eventually perceive Griffin as a threat to their collective order. This article stated that when someone hurts society, it never cries for them. Because Griffin is viewed as such, society ultimately forced him to make amends (Baria, B. 2016). This demonstrates how communities resist when exploitation reaches a point of intolerance, not just because they are angry, but also as a sign of moral healing and community togetherness. This dynamic represents the proletariat's rising against bourgeois

dominance from a Marxist standpoint. As a result of exploitation, resistance takes on the characteristic of class consciousness. Griffin's predicament is both political and personal; when the oppressed decide they will no longer be quiet, he will fall.

Thomas Marvel, a vagabond who has been compelled to help Griffin, urgently seeks safety in an inn. Marvel thinks Griffin, the invisible man, is pursuing him and will murder him, which is why he is scared and screaming for assistance. Clutching the stolen books, his scientific research, he storms into the inn and pleads with the staff to conceal him and lock him up somewhere secure. He begs those inside to keep him safe from Griffin since he is so terrified. This scene demonstrates how Griffin's misuse of authority causing intense anxiety in everyone, even those he has forced to assist him, and how others start to take preventative measures against the invisible danger. As stated by Marx in his book where the emergence of a new, disruptive force often incites fear and resistance among the existing social order (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848.).

The article entitled *Female Silence and Psychotherapy through Feminist Approach in Alex Michaelides's The Silent Patient* shows resistance in different forms from how H.G. Wells shows resistance in his novel. In the article Al Areqih said that at the end, Alicia's form of resistance is by being silent. Her silence serves as a deliberate act of resistance against the patriarchal forces that want to control and dominate her (Al Areqih, R. 2025). While H.G. Wells shows the villagers react to Griffin's exploitation by beating Griffin to death as a form of resistance that comes after their fear of Griffin.

CONCLUSION

This study offer new insight on the novel *The Invisible Man* by looking beyond the general focus on the scientific and fantasy aspects and revealing the deeper socio-political criticism constructed throughout the story. The psychological and systematic impact of capitalist ideology in the late 19th-century society is clarified by this approach, which emphasizes Griffin's multidimensional role as both a victim and an agent of exploitation. This study recognize Griffin's behavior as a reaction to structural forces, economic pressures, social alienation, and moral decay that shape and corrupt personality, unlike the previous analyzes that frequently characterize his fall into violence as pure madness. The circling nature of capitalist exploitation is best illustrated by Griffin's dual role, which reveals a cycle in which moral principles are sometimes sacrificed in the name of power and control. Griffin's own marginalization and suffering under an oppressive system primarily cause him to replicate those very injustices he had endured. A dynamic perspective of collective awareness and its function in challenging an oppressive system is also introduced by analyzing society's shifting response to Griffin, from fear to resistance. Through a Marxist lens, this study contributes to an interpretation of Wells' critique of industrial capitalism, emphasizing how unrestrained desire and the dehumanization of labor weaken social unity and individual morality. Finally, by showing how Wells uses the idea of invisibility not just as a scientific metaphor but also as a powerful instrument for challenging inequality, exploitation, and the fragility of social order in

a society that is industrializing quickly, this study contributed to the conversation surrounding the invisible man.

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