

Henry Rider Haggard's Spiritual Questioning and the Concept of Cosmological Interconnectedness

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Abstract

Although Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925) is chronologically not an author of a Romantic movement, the desire controlling his late fantasy can be said to be a Romantic one where he seeks for a unification of spirit and matter. His presentation of a spiritualized natural world in opposition to the materialism of his own culture can well be regarded as an attempt to fictionalize a desired reconciliation of the spiritual and material world. Before he settled his philosophy of universalism, he therefore started writing as a typical late Victorian author extolling the virtues of blood and representing the hunting adventures of western men in his narratives; but later he conceived a supernatural truth among all components of the nature. He, therefore, accepted a common spiritual dimension shared by animals and humans. Such a dimension provided the possibility of communication between animal and human. Therefore, late in his career he stopped writing about then very common hunting stories and instead he dealt with some other narratives featuring spiritual themes and stories where animals were no longer hunted but played some spiritual roles.

This article by this regards clarifies the reasons why Haggard, opposing to several of his contemporaries, differed in his attitude towards the cosmic reality in his environment and how the idea of Haggardian cosmology works.

Keywords: Cosmos, animism, spiritualism, interconnectedness

Henry Rider Haggard'da Tinsel Sorgulama Evrensel Bağlanmışlık Kavramı

Özet

Tarihsel olarak Romantik Dönemin yazarlarından biri olmamasına rağmen Henry Rider Haggard'ın (1856-1925) eserlerindeki temel itkinin Romantik olduğu söylenebilir; çünkü özellikle geç dönem eserlerinde Haggard, tin ile maddenin uzlaşısını aramaktadır. Kendi toplumunun ezici materyal yaşam algısına tezat olarak doğal bir dünya algısını temsil ettiği bu eserleri, tinsel ve maddi bir dünyanın uzlaşısının arzulandığı bir kurgusalılığı sunar. Bu sebeple, evrensellik düşüncesini oluşturmadan önce Haggard, geç Viktorya dönemi pek çok çağdaşı gibi kan dökülen sahneleri resmedip, batılı maceraperestin avcılık hikayelerini anlatarak yazarlık kariyerine başlar; ancak bu tutumu doğada mevcut mistik insanüstü gerçekliği farketmesiyle kariyerinin ileriki yıllarında değişir. Bu yüzden tüm hayvan ve insanların tinsel ortak bir boyutta keşiştiklerine inanır. Böylesi bir boyut hayvan ve insanların birbirleriyle iletişime geçebilmelerine imkan tanır. Bu nedenle, o

gün için popüler olan maceracı seyyahın farklı coğrafyalardaki av hikayelerini anlatmak yerine, hayvanların artık avlanmadığı aksine mistik roller üstlendikleri tinsel konulara vurgu yapan bir anlatımı, yazarlık kariyerinin ilerleyen dönemlerinde tercih ettiği görülmektedir.

Bu makalenin amacı, Haggard'ın çevresindeki gerçeklik olgusuna karşı niçin pek çok çağdaşının aksine zamanla bir farklılaşma yaşadığını örnekleyerek; onun evrensellik düşüncesinin ne olduğunu göstermektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Evren, Animizm, Tinselcilik, Bağdaşıklık

“Haggard was "no simple traditionalist, he was well ahead of his time in his withdrawal from blood sports, while his appreciation of the importance of maintaining the spiritual equilibrium between man and nature is in line with the whole environmental movement of the later twentieth century" (Manthorpe, 1996: 217).

Haggard wrote in the 1880s as well as the four decades that followed, which is to say that he was originating many of the now common devices such as, alienation, collective identity and cultural differences, as well as the concept of similarities among peoples. He was also toying with many taboo concepts, like creation myths, racism, and industrial progress in his vivid representations of both Africans and Englishmen. But the primary question he pursued was, “Is there a spiritual power letting a dimension be shared by all beings in cosmos?” The most satisfying answer to this question undoubtedly lies in his works where Haggard, essentially a humanist, was not satisfied with the mere answer of God; rather he sought to know His nature, he sought to perceive Him. His search in Egyptian and Nordic archaeology, his scrapings in prehistoric temples and tombs, his dealing with spiritualism and physical phenomena, his strong belief in reincarnation were all parts of his quest for the answer. What is clear in his tone is that he felt within himself a deep spiritual investigation that he could not understand, and he firmly believed that it was his duty to explore the spiritual “neverlands” and deduce what he could. Haggard who was in extreme doubt therefore attempted to overcome his doubts in his fictional horizon. For this reason, a sense of overwhelming scepticism and doubt are explicitly seen in his works.

Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925) was born in Norfolk. His generation, born in the 1850's, was steeped in a blend of spiritual doubt and rationalist philosophy, which, of course, formed the cornerstone of Victorian theological debate. His generation grew up doubting their parents' religion and searching for a concrete basis on which to found their own. Some of his contemporaries turned to Rationalism or Positivism, which produced their

Henry Rider Haggard'da Tinsel Sorgulama Evrensel Bağlanmışlık Kavramı

spiritual doubts, engendering the philosophies of Marxism and Fascism with the same reverence previously accorded religion (Senior, 2003: 9). Others sought new assurances that their old beliefs were not in vain, hoping only their dogma was erroneous, not their philosophy. Haggard was ahead of all these. He was thus inclined to accept the fantastic world of spiritual séances he encountered in London. Where away from the touch of his dominant father he lived by himself in lodgings and was his own master for the first time and “he became a frequent visitor at Lady Paulet’s house at 20 Hanover Square where he attended séances,” and that “his acquaintance with Lady Paulet gave him the entree to the spiritualistic society of the day” (Cohen, 1968: 27). This spiritualist fever was very influential on the authors of the day. Even Robert Browning had immortalized the famous “medium Daniel Dunglas in his *Mr. Sludge, The Medium*” (Cohen, 1968: 28). According to Cohen, the spiritualist movement had swept over England in the mid-fifties from America and had become the great fashion of the day (Cohen, 1968: 27). Being a man of his time, Haggard accordingly stayed under the influence of this growing wave of spiritualism. Therefore, the ties related to all these experiences would show themselves in his works years later. The role of spiritualism on Haggard, particularly after some of the séances he attended at Lady Poulett’s house, is best seen in his own words:

[T]o this day I wonder whether the whole thing was illusion, or, if not, what it can have been. Of one thing I am certain that spirits, as we understand the term, had nothing to do with the matter. On the other hand, I do not believe that it was a case of trickery; rather am I inclined to think that certain forces were set loose which, perhaps, had their real origin in our minds, but nevertheless were true phenomena. (Haggard, 1926: 22)

As he pondered on the problem through the years, he came to believe that “there is an even higher variant of preternatural experience--; the communion of the individual soul still resident on earth with other souls that have passed from us; this, too, without the intervention of any medium, but as it were face to face in those surrounding solitudes [where] -- from time to time they find strength to travel” (Haggard, 1926: 23). The experiences he had at Lady Poulett’s house, coupled with his long interest in death and reincarnation, and directed him towards the supernatural elements of South African indigenous beliefs because at the age of 19, Haggard went to South Africa to take up the post of secretary to Sir Henry Bulwer, then governor of Natal where he fell in love with Africa and Zulu culture and on his return to Norfolk in 1881 he began to write. Therefore, his leaving from London for Africa proved to be fortuitous for him and his South African experience no doubt reinforced his growing

animistic ideas. Consequently, he filled his stories with the animistic spiritualism he encountered amongst the Zulu people in Natal.

When the late nineteenth century is regarded overall, the regard for what was seen as a life near nature and therefore near to human origins, became undoubtedly, a concern of the Victorian era. Contemporary life seemed to have lost its contact with nature and originality, which seemed equally unmarred by the tools of scientific and modern life. Yet the general point of view regarding the primitive, to a large extent, also regarded the primitive as a convenient code for otherness, a regard that, in turn, was against modernity and existed alongside the notion of primitive irrationality. It is for this reason that the primitive became a concept spreading both a desire and fear of the other. However, because the primitive also “served to mean continuity and intelligibility of life in the face of anarchy, chaos, and disorder, the core of this entire way of thinking was based upon a concept that stood for a unity of the spiritual and the material in man’s understanding of an existence that seemed to be lost in the modern scientific age” (Langwith, 2006: 11).

Haggard’s fantasy worlds, therefore, put forth a spiritual reaction to a scientific materialism that threatened spiritual life and disassociated the human individual from nature. In most of his works, he therefore seems to have worked on to prove the existence of a spirit world and to exorcise his lingering doubt about the afterlife. In his memoirs he himself underlines the event when at the age of nine he realised his own mortality and its meaning. One night while lying in bed, he remembers telling himself that he must die and that his body “must be buried in the ground” and his “spirit hurried off to a terrible, unfamiliar land which to most people was known as hell” (Haggard, 1926: 16). Starting to question the ideas of existence, death, and God, he seems to have been under the influence of this dreadful event for all his life. On the effects of this event, Pocock remarks that: “this dread never left him; nor did the seeking of an alternative possibility to the unthinkable obliteration of the human spirit. It became the quest of a lifetime” (Pocock, 1993: 7). However, it should be pointed out that his fear of death that he internalized at such an early age was to provide him with his search for a greater perception of both life and the afterlife that all organisms, excluding neither people nor animals, are subject to, as an individual with a religious or spiritualist consciousness would believe.

Therefore, years later when his dog Bob dies in an accident, the instances of such internalizations engraved in his heart are set free. However, until 1904, in accordance with his contemporaries Haggard’s works seem to be replete with hunting escapades, particularly elephant hunting. He narrated several stories including blood sports. For instance, his well-known hero Allan Quatermain makes his living mostly by leading ivory-hunting expeditions and almost in every tale kills a variety of animals for sport or profit. Moreover, his

Henry Rider Haggard'da Tinsel Sorgulama Evrensel Bağlanmışlık Kavramı

most famous work *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) -- which is regarded as the first example of the 'Lost World Novel': a new genre that continued to produce to this day examples such as *Indiana Jones*, *The Mummy* and *Tarzan*-- has a lot of instances of hunting adventures.

This story is actually about the three adventurers --Allan Quatermain, Henry Curtis, and Captain John Good-- who are on their way to Natal in search of Curtis's younger brother George, with whom he seeks reconciliation after a bitter quarrel. All we know about George is that he has embarked on a trip to the interior in search of the legendary King Solomon's mines, about which it is said that no one has ever succeeded in reaching in order to claim the mines for God, Queen, and country (and for self). In fact, Quatermain has an old map drawn in blood by a Portuguese adventurer, Jose Da Silvestra, who died in 1590 on his way to the mines. They are accompanied by a guide, a strong, intelligent African man. They eventually come upon a Zulu-speaking people among the stone ruins of a vanished civilisation. A tyrannical King Twala rules the Kukuanas there. In a skirmish between Twala's army and the party, Twala and his warriors are defeated. The mysterious African who accompanied the whites now reveals himself; he is called Umboba, whose real name is Ignosi. Ignosi is the rightful king of the land and regains the throne from the recent battle. The victorious new king rewards the Englishmen by forcing Gagool, the old witch of the village, to lead them to a secret treasure cave where diamonds are to be found. The search for George Curtis therefore becomes the search for the mines. After they arrive at the cave, it closes in on them and Gagool is killed. Therefore Gagool, the old witch, is seemingly punished at the end of the romance. However, her significance lies in her soon ciphered words that imply the white man's lust for white stones. Being trapped by Gagool in the cave of riches, they believe that they are in their own tomb, and, in fact, the place nearly becomes a tomb for them where they hardly care to take more than a handful of white stones, as their near death experience has caused them to regret their lust for limitless wealth.

Being actually a story of three adventurers *King Solomon's Mines* presents the instances of hunting adventures in detail:

[U]p jumped Good, burning for slaughter, and thinking, perhaps, that it was as easy to kill elephant as he had found it to shoot giraffe, but I caught him by the arm and pulled him down. Boom! Boom! Boom! Went the three heavy rifles, and down came Sir Henry's elephant dead as a hammer, shot right through the heart. Mine fell on to its knees and I thought that he was going to die, but in another moment he was up and off, tearing along straight past me. As he went I gave him the second barrel in the ribs, and this brought him down in good earnest. Hastily

slipping in two fresh cartridges I ran close up to him, and a ball through the brain put an end to the poor brute's struggles. Now was our opportunity, and firing away as quickly as we could load, we killed five of the poor beasts, and no doubt should have bagged the whole herd, had they not suddenly given up their attempts to climb the bank and rushed headlong down the river. We were too tired to follow them, and perhaps also a little sick of a slaughter, eight elephants being a pretty good bag for one day. (Haggard, 1989: 128)

Having largely been interested in hunting -- common as a sporting activity among his fellowmen -- Haggard's early works seem to have had some distinctive characteristics as those of his contemporaries. In spite of such representations within his works, it should, however, be underlined that Haggard had always been remorseful over certain excesses of killing rooted in his recollections of experiences that would foreshadow his later belief in animal spirituality: "Like the majority of country-bred boys I adored a gun-- I did terrible deeds with that gun. Once even, unable to find any other game, I shot a missel-thrush in its nest, a crime that has haunted me ever since" (Haggard, 1926: 16). Likewise, he remarks in his autobiography that:

I poached a pheasant, shooting it on the wing through a thick oak tree so that it fell into a pool, whence it was retrieved with difficulty. Also, I killed a farmer's best-laying duck. It was in the moat of the Castle Plantation, where I concluded no respectable tame duck would be, and there it died, with results almost as painful to me as to the duck, which was demonstrated to have about a dozen eggs inside it. (Haggard, 1926: 17)

Filled with guilt and remorse for his imprudence in killing, Haggard started to contemplate the idea of death at an early age and considered the possibility that all life possessed a certain something elementally spiritual. Therefore, he began asking himself, "Why deny the continuity of life to animals? I have known dogs better than me that, given the chance, might rise to equal the intelligence of man." What is more is that in his autobiography he mentions his friend Burnham about whom he notes: "Burnham assures me that dogs try to pray in an elementary fashion" (Haggard, 1926: 260). The significance of Burnham lays in the fact that he had been raised by American Indians in California and worked in what is now Zimbabwe as a mining explorer. Haggard, therefore, regarded him as an authority on the subject of the spiritual grounding of animals and they obviously discussed American

Henry Rider Haggard'da Tinsel Sorgulama Evrensel Bağlanmışlık Kavramı

Aboriginal animism to a large extent. In his diary, he accordingly gives place of pride to Burnham as he had an important role in his consideration of animal spirituality:

In all such matters he seems to possess a kind of sixth sense, evolved no doubt in the course of his long training in Indian warfare. He was one of the pioneers in the Klondike, whither he travelled across the winter snows on a sledge drawn by dogs, which for some weeks were his sole companions. These dogs he watched very closely, and as a result of his observations he informed me that he was sure from their conduct at night that they possessed some elementary instincts of prayer. His reasons are too long to set out, but they were very striking. (Haggard, 1926: 251)

In this light, although his early stories had examples of slaughter of African animals by British hunters, Haggard basically was always under the influence of his doubts concerning the existence of a spirit world and the possibility of an afterlife existence. Such doubts would reveal themselves in his ideas supporting the philosophy that animals and humans share a common spiritual existence. No doubt that the spiritual movement pervasive in the spiritualist salons of London and his observations in the mysterious powers of Zulu shamans made a great impact on him to follow the tracks leading him toward understand the spiritual life manifested in psychic communication.

A big turning point in Haggard's life, as he remarks in his autobiography, came only in 1904 with a strange incident focusing his attention on the supernatural and bringing his underlying animist philosophy to the fore. On the night of the 9th of July, 1904, a Saturday, he was awakened from a dreadful dream by his wife, a dream absolutely related to his underlying philosophy of animism, for it revolved around a psychic communication with his daughter's pet. His dream evoked:

[A] sense of awful oppression and of a desperate and terrified struggling for life such as the act of drowning would probably involve. But between the time that I heard my wife's voice and the time that my consciousness answered to it, or so it seemed to me, I had another dream. I dreamed that a black retriever dog, a most amiable and intelligent beast named Bob, which was the property of my eldest daughter, was lying on its side among brushwood, or rough growth of some sort, by water. My own personality, in some mysterious way, seemed to me to be rising

from the body of the dog, which I knew quite surely to be Bob.
(Haggard, 1926: 270)

Haggard argues, in his autobiography, that at the time of the dog's accident they were spiritually in touch with one another: "In my vision the dog was trying to speak to me in words, and failing, transmitted to my mind in an undefined fashion the knowledge that it was dying. Then everything vanished, and I woke to hear my wife asking me why on earth I was making those horrible and weird noises. I replied that I had had a nightmare about a fearful struggle, and that I had dreamed that old Bob was in a dreadful way, and was trying to talk to me and to tell me about it" (Haggard, 1926: 270). His apparent slide into a new taste of life in combining animal and human qualities as Monsman states might be "a Wordsworthian manoeuvre that sees all the rich thicket of phenomenal reality as instinct and inspired with divine spirit" (Monsman, 2006: 52).

In this context, such a manoeuvre seeing all the rich thicket of phenomenal reality as instinct and inspired with divine spirit can only be understood when the idea of "a slide into taste" is clarified. The idea of slide imbedded in this phrase stands for a smooth, decisive movement into the discourse, distinguishing psychological choice, engendering a new experience of new sensations and feelings. Hence, for newly converted Darwinians such as Haggard, their discourse is a movement between distinguishing elements that will include their combination and integration in the end -- a movement between the characteristics of the human and the animal realms. As an organism, they (man and animal) are identical, spiritually identical, though intellectually different. Hence, it is only man who possesses a potential for coding, defining, categorizing anew. Yet irrespective of the realm of intellect, the primary emphasis here is that we should always expect across the coming centuries new ideas, new discourses: a slide into the new, into new tastes; that is, a slide of movement realized by telepathy and spiritual communication *between organisms that can, of course be sensed only spiritually* (Emphasis mine).

Although Haggard sensed the complete correspondence of animal and human instinct in his sleep, he tried to justify the mystical side of this event with several examples, as it was, according to him, more than a dream. Not until Sunday night did he realize that Bob the dog had indeed got lost and on the next Thursday Haggard discovered the body of the animal floating in the Waverly, a local stream very close to his house. Later, he had the dog's body examined by a local veterinarian from whom he learned that it had received a severe head injury and afterwards drowned. However, with the help of two railroad workmen, he determined that a train had hit the dog; and further, it was the Saturday 11:00PM

Henry Rider Haggard'da Tinsel Sorgulama Evrensel Bağlanmışlık Kavramı

excursion train that had passed, which meant that the accident had happened three hours before his dream.

Regarding this obvious psychic communication between Bob and himself, Haggard in his autobiography expounds on the telepathic correspondence of or between beings, whether they are physically alive or not. This very specific dream experience of his cements for him his belief that the whole of creation is closely interrelated in some way and that, under particular conditions, the presence of the spirit entities of beings, from different dimensions, can communicate with one another. "Although the veterinary thinks that death was practically instantaneous, its life may perhaps have lingered for a few minutes -- it must have suffocated and sunk, undergoing, I imagine, much the same sensations as I did in my dream, and in very similar surroundings to those that I saw therein -- namely, amongst a scrubby growth at the edge of water" (Haggard, 1926: 271). However, extremely doubtful about the veterinary's detection and almost sure about his own experience, he cannot help highlighting in his autobiography his understanding of this dream experience:

It seemed almost certain that the dog Bob communicated with me after its death, which, if it could be absolutely and finally proved, as it cannot, would solve one of the mysteries of our being, by showing that the spirit even of a dog can live on when its mortal frame is destroyed and physical death has happened. If a dog – then how much more a man! (Haggard, 1926: 273)

The effect upon Haggard was so great that he published the details of the incident in *the Journal of the Society of Psychical Research*. He, therefore, mentions the letter he wrote to Sir Oliver Lodge, whom he defines as "both an eminent man of science and a great student of such hidden matters" (Haggard, 1926: 274), and discloses that he asked Lodge "whether he possessed such evidence as would satisfy a reasonable person, say a judge or a juryman, of the fact of the continued existence of the individual after his physical death" (Haggard, 1926:274). The answer he receives, in a sense, serves as a confirmation of his suspicion:

"As to your question -- it is not an easy one. By scientific experience I have myself become absolutely convinced of the persistence of existence, and I regard death as an important episode -- the reverse of birth -- but neither of these episodes is really initial or final. One is the assumption of connection with matter; the other is the abandoning of that connection." (Haggard, 1926: 274)

The idea of the spiritual interconnection of beings seems to have affected his apprehension of the cosmos all his life. He concludes his commentary of this unusual experience of his as follows:

I am forced to conclude that the dog Bob, between whom and myself there existed a mutual attachment, either at the moment of his death, if his existence can conceivably have been prolonged till after one in the morning, or as seems more probable, about three hours after that event, did succeed in calling my attention to its actual or recent plight by placing whatever portion of my being is capable of receiving such impulses when enchained by sleep, into its own terrible position. (Haggard, 1926: 272)

Such an incidence, according to John Senior, must have “arisen out of some non-bodily or surviving part of the life or spirit of the dog” that, as soon as [Haggard’s] sleep gave it an opportunity, reproduced those things in his mind -- to bid him farewell” (Senior, 2003: 4). *Animism and the idea of spiritualism arising out of the same stream of thought affect his consideration of all the components of the universe, regardless of their being animal or human, ancient or modern, primitive or civilised.* (Emphasis mine) Such a strange incident involving Bob induces a life-changing effect on him. He himself notes in his autobiography:

This experience produced a great effect upon me and at first frightened and upset me somewhat, for without doubt it has a very uncanny side. By degrees, however, I came to see that it also has its lessons, notably one lesson -- that of the kinship, I might almost say the oneness, of all animal life. I have always been fond of every kind of creature, and especially of dogs, some of which have been and are as very dear friends to me. But up to this date I had also been a sportsman. Shooting was my principal recreation But now, alas! I only bring them down in imagination with an umbrella or a walking stick. From that day forward, except noxious insects and so forth, I have killed nothing. (Haggard, 1926: 272)

His overwhelming connectedness to the idea of spiritual oneness is revealed in the last words of a letter of his written to the editor of *The Times*. He deduces therein the meaning of such an extraordinary experience as follows:

Henry Rider Haggard'da Tinsel Sorgulama Evrensel Bağlanmışlık Kavramı

It does seem to suggest that there is a more intimate ghostly connection between all members of the animal world, including man, than has hitherto been believed, at any rate by Western peoples; that they may be, in short, all of them different manifestations of some central, informing life, through inhabiting the universe in such various shapes. (Haggard, 1926: 272)

Similarly, commenting on the death of Lord Rippon, who was a well-known hunter and adventurer, Haggard notes:

It is a curious cause for pride (he had shot over 50000 head of game) this wholesale slaughter for personal amusement of creatures with whom we are connected by the common link of life, coming presumably from the same source and at death thither returning ... but I have argued this question to the best of my ability in my fantastic parable *The Mahatma and the Hare*. (qtd in Senior, 2003: 27)

On this account, his lifelong exploration and personal experiences in search of supernatural truth can be said to have led him to accept a common spiritual dimension shared by animals and humans. Therefore as seen in the quotation above, he came to the resolution that “we are connected by the common link of life.” In terms of Haggard’s apprehension of the spiritual connectedness of beings, as he himself alleges, no book is more revealing of his beliefs than his short fantasy *The Mahatma and the Hare* (1911) which is a fantasy with a certain purpose, which is opposition to killing animals for sport. The story is therefore about a canny hunter and the hare, and their ironical words allow the reader ponder upon the idea of God, spirituality and also the equality of beings. In a very complimentary review, *The Athenaeum* captured the essence of the book:

Here [Haggard] makes use of the supernatural very delicately and deftly-- The machinery of this “dream story” is odd and yet persuasive-- The tale is a frank statement of the claims of “sport” and those of humanitarianism-- The story is as admirable an argument for the animal world as we have seen-- all the more forcible because of its dispassionate fairness. In these pages we are made to see, willy-nilly, with the eyes of the hare, to listen with his ears; and-- the good average English ‘sportsman’ is shown as a hideous menace, a monster of cruelty. The author is

careful to explain the latter's point of view, and he does not make the mistake of sentimentalizing. We congratulate Mr. Haggard on a fine imaginative piece of work. (qtd in Bursey, 1972: 35)

Believing that all creatures on earth come from the same source and return to the same place, Haggard deals with the idea of the spiritual universality of beings very explicitly in his *The Mahatma and the Hare*. His sympathy embraces all creatures. Haggard's belief in the importance of all life in the design of creation is responsible for the remarkable empathy he apparently feels for the hare, and his apparently complete identification with the animal world. In the particular story itself, a calming comfort descends upon the author as he merely contemplates spiritual existence. Spiritual existence corresponds to a state of Nirvana: "In that place where my spirit visits, time and distance do not exist" (Bursey, 1972: 36). *The Mahatma and the Hare*, in this respect, is both a synthesis of Haggard's mysticism and convincing evidence of his humanity.

In this story, Haggard explains the life and death of a hare that confronts the hunter responsible for his death and argues about the results of hunting as a so-called sport by mankind. The Mahatma explains that the hunter was a first-rate all-around sportsman; the hare as the next narrator, however, retorts:

[W]hich means that he spent most of the year in killing animals such as me. Yes, he spent quite eight months out of the twelve in killing us one way or another, for when there was no more killing to be done in his own country, he would travel to others and kill there. He would even kill pigeons from a trap, or young rooks just out of their nests, or rats in a stack, or sparrows among ivy, rather than not kill anything. I've heard Giles say so to the under-keeper and call him 'a regular slaughterer! And 'a true-blood Englishman'. (Haggard, 1991: 192)

Listening to the hare, the hunter however denies the hare's evaluation of the matter and starts speaking with references from the Bible by which he intends to legitimize his deed of killing: "You were a beast; I was a man with dominion over you. You can read all about that in the Book of Genesis" (Haggard, 1991: 138). The hare answers in a way that puts forth the severest and harshest of questioning before the readers' eyes: "I never heard of the Book of Genesis; does the Book of Genesis say you have the right to torment that which is weaker than the tormentor? -- Who knows but you will find everyone of those living things you have amused yourself by slaughtering waiting for you, each praying for justice to its maker and your own" (Haggard, 1991: 147-49).

Henry Rider Haggard'da Tinsel Sorgulama Evrensel Bağlanmışlık Kavramı

Lamponing the hunter's belief to be able to justify his murder, Haggard sustains the story with the hunter's angry reply, to place him in a worse situation:

“You dare to lecture me”, said the man, “me, the heir of all the ages, as the poet called me. Why, you nasty little animal, do you know that I have killed hundreds like you, and,” he added, with a sudden afflatus of pride, “thousands of other creatures, such as pheasants, to say nothing of deer and larger game? That has been my principal occupation since I was a boy. I may say that I have lived for sport; got very little else to show for my life, so to speak.” (Haggard, 1991: 241)

Later, the conversation continues on the note of a very striking question: the hare asks the hunter who is now supposed to tell the truth because they are waiting before the gates of heaven and the angels are witnessing: “Although you are repeating yourself, I'll answer with another question, knowing that here you must tell the truth. Did you really rear us all for food? Was it for this that you kept your keepers, your running dogs and your hunting dogs, that you might kill poor defenceless beasts and birds to fill men's stomachs? If this was so, I have nothing more to say.” The hunter now obliged to tell the truth tries to justify his deed through the tenets of Christianity and so hopes implicitly to get support from the mighty angels:

“You know very well that it was not so. I did not rear up pheasants and hares merely to eat them or that others might eat them. Something forces me to tell you that it was in order that I might enjoy myself by showing my skill in shooting them, or to have the pleasure and exercise of hunting them to death. Still,” he added defiantly, “I who am a Christian man maintain that my religion perfectly justified me in doing all these things, and that no blame attaches to me on this account.” (Haggard, 1991: 241)

However, in this discussion outside of the gates to heaven and before the angels, the hare is thought to be right and is invited into heaven by the hosts of heaven: “Who hath suffered most? Let that one first taste of peace.” Now all the grim ones among the slaughtered hosts surged forward since each outworn soul believed that it had suffered most and was in the bitterest need of peace. But the Helpers and the Guardians gently pressed them back, and then a command was given: “Draw near, thou Hare.” (Haggard, 1991: 243).

The most revealing moment in Haggard's story of the interconnectedness of all beings comes in the end with a scornful epithet from Hare, who scorns the hunter for being a pleasure-seeking materialist man:

“But what do you mean about waking up as something else? Please be more plain. And what else? Oh! Who can know? Possibly as you are on the human Road you might even become a man some day, though I should not advise you to build on such a hope as that. What do you say, Mahatma? A man! One of those two legged beasts that hunt hares; a thing like Giles and Tom—yes, Tom? Oh! Not that—not that! I'd almost rather go through everything again than become a cruel, torturing man.” As it spoke thus the Hare grew so disturbed that it nearly vanished; literally it seemed to melt away till I could only perceive its outline. With a kind of shock I comprehend all the horror that it must feel at such a prospect as I had suggested to it, and really this grasping of the truth hurt my human pride. (Haggard, 1991: 243)

In his portrayal of men as hunters killing for sport, Haggard is actually referring to hunting as the middle class white man's leisure activity, a fact commonly depicted in the works of many authors of the time. While the white man of the West killed for sports, it was a well-known fact that *many of the indigenous peoples of Africa and America, at that same time, showed a great ritualistic respect for the animals that they hunted only for food* (Emphasis mine). The rituals they practiced when hunting animals for sustenance are worth keeping in mind as these tribal hunters mostly praised the swiftness and strength of the animals in an animistic belief that nature allocated its core energy among the all members of organismic life; therefore they were supposed to be grateful for all subjects of nature and be respectful towards animals, as they were not different from them in spiritual respects. The Hare's hatred and disgust of the idea of being a man is quite understandable since the man in this context corresponds to a Western figure very covetous about consuming and killing and reshaping animal subjects in nature as justifiable acts.

Undoubtedly, the spiritual movement of the age, including Haggard's experiences in his early years and most significantly his becoming acquainted with the tribal beliefs and rituals highly common among African indigenous peoples, all left a great peaceful impact upon Haggard. He, particularly in his late career years, made room very frequently for his first-hand observations of the animals as visual feasts rather than as objects of hunting. It might be said of Haggard today that he believed that agency belonged to all creatures. *Diary of*

Henry Rider Haggard'da Tinsel Sorgulama Evrensel Bağlanmışlık Kavramı

an African Journey reveals Haggard's agony for the corruption he witnessed in 1914 South Africa, a South Africa that he was returning to that was completely different from the one he had left years ago. At the same time, this diary demonstrates how much significance he gives to pure primeval nature in Africa; for he feared that it might be ruined in the same cruel way that white men had perpetrated previously. In this diary composed by Coan in 2001, he explains the destruction he finds in South Africa as follows:

[A]nd yet I am told that there are not a third part the animals of what there were some years ago. Were it not for this great reserve by now all would be gone, as doubtless all are destined to go since soon or late the destroying white man will have them upon this pretext or the other. It will be said they bring tsetse fly, or that the land is wanted for "settlement" and the shooters will be let in and glut themselves and these divine creatures will become but a memory. How anyone can want to slaughter such beautiful animals save now and again for food passes my comprehension. It is nothing but murder, yet I must remember that once when I was young I did it myself.

I have seen the Transvaal veld black with game and 35 years later I have travelled through it without finding so much as a duiker buck and that is what will one day happen in East Africa, or so I fear. I should mention that with the buck is much of other life, huge beaked and gorgeous birds, crested mahems (crowned cranes) that I remember in South Africa, but which seem very rare there now, blue crane, white winged whitish hawks, guinea-fowl in flocks, partridges, lovely butterflies, and so on. (Coan, 2001:266)

As it was noted before, in his early stories Haggard was in tune with his Victorian counterparts as he narrated several hunting stories which were popular in late nineteenth century. However, in time he gradually grew in his perception of nature spiritually and recognised the importance and the significance of balance in all of nature. He pondered on this and internalized the idea of the spiritual existence of beings and made room for all elements of life in his late works. Particularly after his experiences in South Africa among the Zulus and also the strange incident he experienced about his daughter's pet dog, Bob, Haggard gave up both hunting and narrating hunting stories in the belief that animals might have souls and there should be a spiritual equilibrium between man and nature maintaining a great universe as he himself asserts in his autobiography: "The insect sees more than the worm, the snake more than the

insect, the dog more than the snake, and the man, erect in his pride, more than all of them. But how much does the man see of the whole great universe, or even of this little earth?" (Haggard, 1926: 58) Therefore, the idea of cosmological interconnectedness affected his consideration of all the components of the universe, regardless of their being animal or human, ancient or modern, primitive or civilised. Contrary to his counterparts, he, thus, employed only some environmental themes in his late works where he also eased his spiritual doubts: not satisfied with the mere answer of God, he now perceived him not to be more than man's true relationship to nature. As a result of all such inquiry and contemplation, what finally becomes clear with Haggard is that whatever the cause or power is in the universe, the balance in nature with the reconciliation of beings in it is the ultimate meaning of a spiritual existence.

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