
Rebels and Their Frustration in Self-Realization: A Comparative Study of White Bone Demon in *Journey to the West* and Griffin in *The Invisible Man*

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to contribute to a cross-cultural comparative study of White Bone Demon in *Journey to the West* and Griffin in *The Invisible Man*, which facilitates a re-interpretation of the two classics. The three beatings of White Bone Demon in *Journey to the West* and the three beatings of Griffin in *The Invisible Man* both are two of the wonderful and significant sketches in world literature. White Bone Demon and Griffin, two interesting rebels, are highly comparative and relevant, but they are ruined by the unreasonable social forces in their pursuit of self-realization and individuality. The time and space-crossing textuality of the two novels have very profound philosophical implications conducive to the understanding of the inner relation and literary values of mythological and sci-fi texts.

Keywords: *White Bone Demon, Griffin, Journey to the West, The Invisible Man, comparative study, rebel, self-realization.*

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Introduction:

Wu Cheng-en (1500-1582), a distinguished novelist in ancient China, was keen on the legends and unofficial history from his childhood and so he had a good comprehension of ancient Chinese myths and folklore. Because of the frustration of his struggle for official career, his witness of the corruption of imperial examination system and his poverty-stricken life, he had a profound understanding of the social system and interpersonal relations in the late period of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). In order not to violate the imperial system at that time, he had to express his inner resentment under the cloak of fantasy fiction. On the basis of folk legends, scripts and operas about Tang Sanzang^① in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), he completed the literary masterpiece *Journey to the West* characterized by bold plot conception, penetrating description of the time travels of men and gods, and artistic innovations. In this novel, many characters have the abilities of changing oneself into invisible, incredible deformation and rapid flight, tinged with strong mythological features. 325 years after the death of Wu Cheng-en, H.G. Wells (1866-1946), an English writer, combined mythology with modern scientific knowledge, giving his novel a scientific sense of probability and simulation.^[1] In his science fiction *The Invisible Man* (1897), he introduced the knowledge of modern physics and biological principles to his narration of an invisible man, but he did not stick to these disciplines in the whole process of his literary creation. What Wells intends to explore is not the progress of science, but the conflicts between scientific development and people's ideology and morality. *Journey to the West* was written in the 1670s, but due to historical constraints, the novel did not have a specific publishing year, let alone a publishing house, but it was passed on from one generation to another in the form of folk stereotypes or manuscripts. By contrast, *The Invisible Man* was serialized in *Pearson Weekly* in 1897, and published as a full novel in the end of that year. The two novels have totally different historical backgrounds, but they are equally powerful in exposing and criticizing the irrational social system. Griffin, the protagonist in *The Invisible Man*, is comparable to White Bone Demon in *Journey to the West* in the terms of ideas, personality, ability and fate. The two novels combine the themes of mythology or fantasy with social criticism, featured by rich symbolic meanings.

A Gifted Scholar versus a Sci-Fi Fan:

The stories of White Bone Demon in *Journey to the West* and Griffin in *The Invisible Man* are derived from Wu Cheng-en's and Wells' life experiences respectively. Wu Cheng-en is a gifted scholar, while Wells is a science fiction fan. The social and family backgrounds of Wu Cheng-en and Wells are quite different from each other, but there are some similarities in the living conditions of their adult life. Wu Cheng-en, who had repeatedly failed in the imperial examinations, was disappointed at and dissatisfied with the feudal society at that time. The pursuit of official posts through imperial examinations has become an unbreakable "glass ceiling" for him in his career, and thus he felt trapped and ruined. By contrast, Wells was born in a poor family, and when he grew up, he was involved in the trend of social

^①Tang Sanzang, also known as the Tang Monk, Tang Priest or Tang Seng, is a central character in the novel *Journey to the West* by Wu Cheng-en. In the novel, he is a Chinese Buddhist monk who renounces his family to join the Sangha from childhood. He is actually a reincarnation of Golden Cicada, a disciple of the Buddha. He is sent on a mission to Tianzhu (an ancient Chinese name for India) to fetch a set of Buddhist scriptures back to China for the purpose of spreading Buddhism in his native land. He becomes sworn brothers with Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty of China.

transformation in Britain. He abhorred social hierarchy and economic exploitation. However, neither of them has found a way to solve their plights. The unreasonable social system has blocked their paths in the real society, leading them to turn to the literary imagination space and the demons' space to find their new opportunity to make good in their individual career.

Wu Cheng-en was born in 1501 to a declining family in Huai'an, Jiangsu, China. His father failed in his academic career, so he turned to do business. His father's great storage of books offered him a good chance of wide reading, and gradually he was good at the writing of poetry and prose. With the increment of his knowledge, he wanted to change his fate through the imperial examination. However, his path to realize himself was very difficult. Not until his middle age, he was given an offer as "a student of the Imperial State School."^① He had no financial income as a student, so he relied on the selling of his poems and prose works to subsidize his family for a long time. In his later years, he served as the assistant to the magistrate of Changxing County. Due to his moral integrity as an official, he refused to commune with others and could not bear with the darkness and corruption of feudal officialdom. He soon resigned and returned home to spend the rest of his life in poverty. In his novel, *Journey to the West*, he expresses his dissatisfaction with the social reality and his desire to change it with the help of mythological figures, and demonstrates his political aspiration to establish a country under the leadership of a wise emperor or a kind god. *Journey to the West* is the only novel written by Wu Cheng-en, which reflects various problems of beliefs, ethics and social system in the tough journey experienced by Tang Sanzang and his three disciples. This novel is peculiar, romantic, thrilling and interesting. In the characterization, he adopted the trinity of "human beings, gods and beasts" to create the artistic images of Tang Sanzang, the master monk, and his three disciples, Monkey King^②, Sandy^③ and Piggie^④, going to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist Scriptures. At the same time, he created a variety of monster images who tried various tricks and plots to trap or even ruin Tang Sanzang in his journey to the west. White Bone Demon, the most distinctive image of she-monster in the novel, has left a very deep impression on readers. She is the first monster to appear on Tang Sanzang's journey to the west, and her appearance sets the general tone for all kinds of difficulties and traps that Tang Sanzang and his disciples would encounter. The images of other monsters appearing in the novel are nothing but her variants on different occasion.

Wells' family life has a lot of similarities with that of Wu Cheng-en. Wells was born in 1866 to a poor family in Kent, England, and his parents were servants of noble families. As a teenager, Wells was an apprentice who experienced many difficulties and hardships in life, and gradually formed a critical view of the British society, which laid the ideological foundation for his later acceptance of the theory of Utopian socialism. In terms of the achievements of literary creation, Wells had written more than 100 science fictions, which far exceeded Wu Cheng-en in number. However, like Wu Cheng-en, he wanted to allude to and criticize the drawbacks or evils of the real society through a way of surrealistic writing, and express his dissatisfaction with the social status quo. He tried to convey the idea of transforming society through education and science and technology in the form of science fiction. He disapproved of class struggle and violent revolution, but thought it necessary to eliminate anarchy in capitalist society.^[2] Wells' *The Invisible Man*, published in 1897, describes a young scientist named Griffin. Griffin has a fanatical pursuit of scientific inventions, so he insists on doing scientific experiments without taking rest or relaxation into account, and finally invents the skill of invisibility as he wishes. However, instead of using scientific inventions to benefit mankind, Griffin dreams to dominate the world and establish a "rule of terror" by virtue of invisibility. In spite of his old classmate Kemp's hard-hearted exhortations, he always wants to use the achievements of scientific and technological inventions to serve his desire for power, resulting in incompatible relations with others, and he is finally beaten to death by the onlookers when he is caught. *The Invisible Man* directs its vision at the correlation between scientific development and human morality and presents to readers the potential negative effects of the amoral development of science and technology. In a materialistic

^① In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, some scholars were chosen from the schools of prefectures and counties to study in the Imperial State School each year or every other year and became the scholars of the state. Some well-known Chinese writers, such as Pu Songling and Wu Cheng-en, once studied in the Imperial State School.

^② The Monkey King, more known as Sun Wukong in China, is one of the main characters in *Journey to the West*. In the novel, he is a monkey born from a stone who acquires supernatural powers through Taoist practices. After rebelling against heaven and being imprisoned under a mountain by the Buddha, he later accompanies Tang Sanzang on a journey to retrieve Buddhist sutras from "the West."

^③ Sandy, also known as the Sha Monk or Sha Wujing, one of the chief characters in *Journey to the West*, is a figure characterized by his honesty, peace, calmness, and patience. It is generally acknowledged that his character is like most of the Chinese people. Originally the Sha Monk was a general in heaven, but due to an "accidental" loss of his temper, he broke a valuable vase. Punished by the Jade Emperor and exiled to Earth, he was reborn as a man-eating sand demon. Searching for a body guard for Tang Sanzang, the bodhisattva Guanyin recruited the Sha Monk. As the third disciple of Tang Sanzang, even though his fighting skills are not as great as that of the Monkey King or Piggie, he is still a great warrior protecting Tang Sanzang. He is actually a kind-hearted and obedient person and very loyal to his master. Among the three disciples he is the most polite and logical one.

^④ Piggie, or Zhu Bajie in Chinese, is one of the chief characters in *Journey to the West* who is supposedly incarnated through the spirit of a pig, a symbol of men's cupidity.

society, once scientific and technological inventions fall into the hands of evil or cruel-hearted persons, the outcome of the world might be terrible.^[3] Thus, this novel to some extent reflects Wells' personal confusion on the development of science and technology.

Wu Cheng-en criticized the social abuses at that time by telling the story of Tang Sanzang's hardships in obtaining sutras from the Western Heaven and conveyed the idea that only sutras could be helpful to solve the social and political problem at the time. All the monsters or demons encountered by Tang Sanzang and his disciples are symbols of trouble-makers or destroyers who threaten to obstruct, frustrate and damage the social reforms. With his rich imagination, Wu Cheng-en created hundreds of positive and negative images with the mixed characteristics of "human beings, gods and beasts" through some wonderful episodes, such as the "Monkey King's Trouble-Making in the Heaven" and a series of stories about his fights with wits and bravery with various monsters. The she-monsters in Wu Cheng-en's novel are a unique group, each of who is adept at scheming and martial arts. They always want to eat or marry Tang Sanzang, so they fight battles of wits with the Monkey King. In the novel, there are not only dangerous and tense scenes, but romantic pictures of love affairs, which enable readers to get aware of the profound connotation of various life experiences and the tough endeavor to overcome the difficulties and obstacles in life.^[4] Wu Cheng-en seemingly associates the beauty of these she-monsters with the shameless acts and malicious schemes. In fact, his aim is to raise a social question worth readers' further consideration: if beautiful women become evil, to what degree should a society be responsible for it? Wu Cheng-en's description shows his perplexity in the pursuit of Buddhist rejuvenation: how to resolve the contradiction between Buddhism's "no killing" and the violent discipline over "dissidents" and "pagans"?

Different from Wu Cheng-en, Wells pays more attention to the hypothetical application of scientific discovery in his novel, which involves physical, biological, historical, legal, ethical, moral, natural and social knowledge. Wells is good at popularizing scientific common sense and showing scientific knowledge in the fictional form. His science fiction *The Invisible Man* belongs to the genre of soft science fiction^①. It mainly describes the conflicts between personal struggle and utilitarian society on the road of scientific development, as well as the social problems brought about by the development of science and technology. Political conflict is one of the important aspects of his fiction.^[5] His works also show various possibilities for the future development of science and technology. In the scientific and technological invention brought no benefits to the mankind, resulting in a lot of side effects which greatly endangered social stability.

As Huang Lushan said, "Although Wells indicated that his sci-fi works did not lie in foreseeing the possibility of scientific development, he based his imagination on his academic knowledge as a Bachelor of Science. Some of his works are outstanding scientific predictions and provide some valuable references for the development of science and technology at that time."^[3] The plot development of Wells' *The Invisible Man* is based on scientific principles, conceiving in the imaginary space what has not been developed by human beings, warning people of the terrible outcomes which might be caused by the abuse of scientific inventions. On the contrary, the plot development of Wu Cheng-en's *Journey to the West* has nothing to do with scientific principles. The development of many plots relies on the literary imagination, myths and folklore, which often causes unrealistic emotional response from readers. In a word, the social backgrounds and personal struggle experiences of Wu Cheng-en and Wells lay the foundation for the portrayal and shaping of the two images of White Bone Demon and Griffin.

Deformation and Invisibility:

Deformation refers to the whole or partial change of a person's appearance or shape under certain conditions. Most of the deformations in *Journey to the West* are the changes of appearance, figure and sex, and even the free transformation from human beings to various animals. Many characters also have the function of invisibility in critical situations, but the invisibility of the characters in the *Journey to the West* is totally different from that of Griffin. The invisibility of the Monkey King and White Bone Demon has no scientific basis, so they could vanish according to their will on any occasion, and Griffin's invisibility is realized with the function of chemical agents. Generally speaking, invisibility refers to the concealment of the physical shape of a person or stuff. From an optical point of view, invisibility can be achieved if light can distort it in one way. Light is emitted in the form of a straight line. If a method is used to make the light that is a straight line become a curve and bypass the object itself, then the object that was "bypassed" by

^①Soft science fiction, or soft SF, is a category of science fiction with two different definitions. It either (1) explores the "soft" sciences, and especially the social sciences (for example, anthropology, sociology, or psychology), rather than engineering or the "hard" sciences (for example, physics, astronomy, or chemistry), or (2) is not scientifically accurate. Soft science fiction of either type is often more concerned with character and speculative societies, rather than speculative science or engineering. It is the opposite of hard science fiction. The term first appeared in the late 1970s and was attributed to Australian literary scholar Peter Nicholls.

the light can exist in an invisible state.^[6] In *Journey to the West* and *Invisible Man*, White Bone Demon and Griffin have the ability of deformation or invisibility respectively.

The story of the “three beatings of White Bone Demon” is included in Chapter 27 of *Journey to the West*, “White Bone Demon Makes Tricks on Tang Sanzang while He Drives Away the Monkey King in His Anger.” White Bone Demon has three skills of self-protection. The first one was deformation. She can instantly transform herself into a person of any age or any gender; in the process of transformation, she not only changes her appearance, but also varies her clothes to match her new social role. The second one is flight. She usually walks on the ground like a human being, but whenever she is in danger, she can fly away like a bird. The last one is the departure of her actual soul from a dead physical body, which appears like the shell of a person. Whenever her life was threatened, she would pretend to be dead, leaving a visible dead physical body on the scene to fool the enemy and then retreat from the spot without being watched. The character of White Bone Demon is constantly changing, flexible, alert and crafty. However, she also has some defects in her ability: she can change her physical body at will or according to her needs, but the types of her change are only three, and in her struggle with the Monkey King, the transformed identity has a logical error, which leads to the Monkey King’s discovery of her true identity. She can soar through the clouds, but the speed and height of her flying is much poorer than the Monkey King, so it is unlikely for her to be the Monkey King’s opponent. As a result, she becomes the victim of the Monkey King’s banality of evil^①. On the surface, the Monkey King is portrayed as a hero with insurmountable wisdom and boundless magic power, but in essence he is the implementer of the banality of evil. In order to accomplish the escort task assigned by Guanyin^② (a Bodhisattva) and avoid the punishment of Tathagata Buddha^③, he never checks what is right or wrong in his fights with the monsters on the journey, nor does he examine or take into account what causes the appearance of the monsters, but simply carries out the task of killing. Despite the dissuasion of Tang Sanzang, he kills or injures those monsters ostensibly to preserve Tang Sanzang’s life, but in essence preserve his own life because he and Tang Sanzang have formed an inseparable survival entity. If he failed to protect Tang Sanzang, the Guanyin and Avalokiteshvara would never set him free. Not only was he worried about his life, but he would never have a future. White Bone Demon is the first monster killed by Monkey King in his escort mission. Her death serves as foil to the Monkey King’s “might force” and “justice.” In fact, she is just a tragic figure who is crushed by the systematic forces of the society at that time.

Griffin is a sci-fi character created by Wells, whose ability of deformation is far poorer than that of White Bone Demon. Griffin cannot decide when to be visible or invisible according to his own wishes. His invisibility is based on certain scientific principles. His embarrassment lies in his inability to restore himself to his original shape after being made invisible, which makes it hard for him to live his life as usual in human society, but he fails to find an effective way to restore his original shape from the invisible shape until the end of his life. In a scientific sense, Griffin’s deformation is still a semi-finished product in that there are still many defects to overcome. For example, his body can be made invisible, but not his footprints. When he walks, people cannot see how he walks, but can see a series of footprints left behind. Invisibility can only be realized when naked. Griffin could not turn invisible with clothes on his body. Therefore, for invisibility, clothes cannot be worn even in winter. Food in the stomach cannot be made invisible, so if Griffin wants to make him completely invisible, he has to be in a hungry state. The limitation of Griffin’s invisibility brings about his failure in the pursuit of his dream of infinite power and unlimited freedom. He can steal something from the shops, but he cannot take away the stolen stuffs without being discovered because he cannot turn them into invisible. Wells gives to a vivid presentation of his stealing from a shop as follows: some articles are moving around in the shop in the mid-air and then flying away from the store. In fact, all of these things are held by Griffin’s hands but his hands and his body are in a state of invisibility, so what the people can see is only the strange floating of things from the shop into the street. Such theft is nothing but a robbery, which eventually leads to police intervention. As a result, Griffin’s living space is getting narrower and narrower because he cannot make his body and stuff he holds invisible at the same time according to his own will.^[7] His skill of deformation cannot be helpful for him to be a stealer, let alone a great powerful person. The defect of his deformation demonstrates the sorrowful and fatal limitation of this scientific invention.

The stories of metamorphosis and invisibility appear from time to time in fiction but not in real life because they are merely legendary. However, there are quite a few ambitious people who dream to have the power of transformation to

^①The concept of the banality of evil is advanced by Hannah Arendt. Her thesis is that Eichmann was not a fanatic or sociopath, but an extremely average person who relied on cliché defenses rather than thinking for himself and was motivated by professional promotion rather than ideology. Banality, in this sense, is not that Eichmann’s actions were ordinary, or that there is a potential Eichmann in all of us, but that his actions were motivated by a sort of stupidity which was wholly unexceptional. Arendt certainly did not disagree about the fact of gratuitous cruelty, but, she claims, “banality of evil” is unrelated to this question. Similarly, the first attempted rebuttal of Arendt’s thesis relied on a misreading of this phrase, claiming Arendt meant that there was nothing exceptional about the Holocaust.

^②Guanyin (also named Avalokitesvara or Padmapani) is a bodhisattva who embodies the compassion of all Buddhas. In Chinese Buddhism, Avalokitesvara has evolved into the somewhat different female figure, Guanyin.

^③Tathagata Buddha is the most powerful Buddhist god. He is well-known for his power, highest religious position, justice and wisdom.

extend their ability or satisfy their desires. In the late 19th century, with the rapid development of science and technology, literature was even more advanced and revolutionary in writers' imagination.^[8] In *The Invisible Man*, Wells directs his attention at the problems of science and technology, and reveals the negative effects caused by the boundless development of science and technology, thus warning us that science is a double-edged sword, and that what is invented may do good or harm to our human world.

White Bone Demon, described by Wu Cheng-en as a representative of evil forces, has certain typical significance and special value in the assessment of all the demons or monsters in the whole book. Actually, except for her desire to eat the meat of Tang Sanzang, she has not done any other evil things. Although the story of "three beatings of White Bone Demon" is a surrealistic one of gods and demons, it reflects the harshness of real life, especially the conflicts and struggles between vulnerable groups and social powers. It artistically summarizes some laws of struggle in social life, which enables people to gain wisdom in their repeated reading. As Goethe said, "as regards the excellent literary works, no matter how well you tried to detect it, it is impossible to reach the bottom."^[9] The episode of "three beatings of White Bone Demon" or even the whole book of *Journey to the West* is such an example. Correspondingly, the common people and Griffin in *Invisible Man* eventually become the objects of Wells' criticism. In his rebellion, Griffin violates the social morality and embarks on a desperate road of solipsism. Short of scientific knowledge, the local villagers regard the invisible Griffin as a devil, rather than a victim of scientific experiments. The local villagers' misunderstanding and fear of Griffin leads to a complete gap between Griffin and the society, and triggers a series of violent incidents and casualties. What White Bone Demon and Griffin have done shows that they all want to make use of their advantages to challenge the social power in order to satisfy their individual pursuit and self-realization to the maximum extent, but they both neglect how to keep a peaceful coexistence with other people harmoniously in society.

Rebellion and Three Beatings:

Who is a demon? Who is a monster? In *Journey to the West*, Wu Cheng-en calls any person or god as a monster if he or she obstructs or endangers Tang Sanzang's mission to take sutras from the West. Tang Sanzang, the envoy of the emperor of the Tang Dynasty, is dispatched to fetch the Buddhist scriptures from the Western Heaven, and the representative of the interests of the ruling class. The Monkey King, Sandy and Piggie who escort Tang Sanzang to the Western Heaven were once the traitors and convicts of the Heavenly Court. Later, under the threat and temptation of Guanyin and Tathagata Buddha, they set foot on the way to escort Tang Sanzang to get the Scriptures. The concepts of "demon" and "non-demon" are highly changeable. Whoever gains the right of voice in the mainstream society and becomes the ruler of the autocratic society, who may have the opportunity to regard any "dissentients" as "demons" or "monsters." The person who has become the ruler might persecute or eliminate them in order to defend the "correctness" or "orthodoxy" that he thinks he is right. White Bone Demon has been living in the wilderness for a long time, and had no way or space for her individual development. Her will to pursue personal development and satisfy personal desires was incompatible with the will of the rulers of fairyland, and eventually becomes the monster or social rebel who obstructs Tang Sanzang and his party on the way of taking the Buddhist scriptures. Griffin, portrayed by Wells in *Invisible Man*, is a lone ranger in the pursuit of science and the first scientific madman in the history of world literature created through the fantasy of modern science and technology. After Griffin becomes invisible because of chemical pills, he is regarded as a monster by the people surrounding him. There was a thrilling struggle between invisible people and ordinary people. Like the Monkey King's killing of White Bone Demon, the ordinary local people also want to have a happy killing of Griffin to demonstrate their will of removing something which they are unfamiliar with.

Both White Bone Demon and Griffin are rebels against society. Both of them want to break through the restrictions and repressions on them imposed by unreasonable social system through their own efforts and wisdom, and they also want to improve their lives and social status. In *Journey to the West*, White Bone Demon was originally the skeleton of a female corpse in Mount White Tiger. After absorbing the essence of heaven and earth, it becomes a goblin, but Wu Cheng-en does not tell us the origin of this female corpse. Under his pen, a fairyland is just like a human world, and whether a demon can become a god or not, to a great extent, depends on his family background and his personal struggle. White Bone Demon is an insignificant monster in the mountains, so there is little chance of success for her to become a fairy. Therefore, she has always been resentful and dissatisfied with the blockage of her struggle for personal success. However, the appearance of Tang Sanzang on her land brings her a great hope. Wu Cheng-en attributes White Bone Demon's motive of eating Tang Sanzang's flesh to her selfish desire to get a certain power to live forever. In fact, White Bone Demon wants to strengthen her magic power by eating the meat of Tang Sanzang, break through the oppression of the celestial autocracy on her struggle for individual success, and at the same time take this matter as a good

opportunity to demonstrate her existence; otherwise, she will live and die namelessly. Wu Cheng-en's description of White Bone Demon aims to reveal the ethical cost of the struggle between social rebels and autocratic system, and then to present the tragic personality of rebels in a critical way, that is, to seek the establishment of one's spiritual self at the sacrifice of his material self.

In fact, the personal experience of White Bone Demon is a simulated portrayal of the living conditions and emotional changes of Wu Cheng-en after he failed in the imperial examination several times. Wu Cheng-en empathizes his hopeless mentality of his failure at imperial examinations with White Bone Demon lurking in the deep mountains who always wants to do something important to stir the world. In *Journey to the West*, as soon as White Bone Demon learns that Tang Sanzang will go through her land on his journey to the West, her rebellious idea arises spontaneously and instantly. Tang Sanzang is a famous monk in the Tang Dynasty. It is said that he is "the incarnation of the Golden Cicada and his prototype formed after ten years' firm belief in and practice of Buddhism. If one ate a piece of meat from his body, he would live a long life without death."^[10] White Bone Demon's attempt to eat Tang Sanzang has three layers of meanings: first, to challenge the authority of the Jade Emperor and Tathagata Buddha; second, to demonstrate her ability; and finally, to increase the span of her life and the power in her body by eating up Tang Sanzang's flesh. Tang Sanzang and his party met with many demons, monsters or ghosts on their way to the west, but White Bone Demon is the most persistent of all demons. In order to capture Tang Sanzang, she adopts three tricks successively. First, White Bone Demon dresses herself up as a beautiful young woman in the countryside to dispel the vigilance of Tang Sanzang and his disciples, and pretends to be a Buddhist to send them fasting meals, aiming at poisoning Tang Sanzang and his followers. When Tang Sanzang is almost cheated by her, the Monkey King suddenly appeared and saw through her trick. He finds that on the surface of the fasting meal was some fragrant rice, but in fact, "it was a jar of long maggots with tails; it was not gluten, but a few frogs, shrimps, jumping all over the ground."^[10] Disregarding the objection of Tang Sanzang and others, the Monkey King brandishes his golden hoop stick and throws it to White Bone Demon. She escapes the fatal blow of the Monkey King by using her skill of instant departure from her physical body. However, after her setbacks, White Bone Demon does not run away to keep her life, but comes back to Tang Sanzang and pretends to look for her daughter, dressing up as an 80-year-old lady to enlist their pity through the trick of compassion evocation, and returns to the scene of the incident, claiming to find her daughter. The Monkey King once again sees through her tricks and lifts the golden hoop stick to beat her. Just before the golden hoop stick falls on her, she immediately breaks away from her real body and leaves a body shell on the ground again, which looks like the dead body of an old woman. White Bone Demon deliberately arouses Tang Sanzang's sense of sin and guilt with her body shell. Tang Sanzang who takes no killing of any life as his guideline in life has witnessed the death of two persons caused by the Monkey King's stick. He is so angry that he wants to drive away the Monkey King. In the end, White Bone Demon adopts a greater-pity-arousing strategy to transform her into an old man, who comes to look for his lost wife and daughter. The Monkey King once again gives a heavy beating to the disguised old man and kills him. That old man is the disguised White Bone Demon. After her death, she instantly turns into a pile of skeletons. White Bone Demon's three attacks on Tang Sanzang and his party fail, but her endeavor can be considered her three attempts to rebel against the unreasonable society and pursue her individual purpose.

Just like White Bone Demon, Griffin, the protagonist of *Invisible Man*, is also a rebel against society and always wants to be recognized in his life. He is a top student in his undergraduate years, and he continues to be engaged in the study of chemistry after graduation. He wants to be a great scholar and gains a wide acclaim. He is very interested in optics and wants to invent something that can make a human body transparent or invisible to the naked eyes. In order to avoid his professors from encroaching on his academic achievements, he abandons his cooperation with his teachers and embarks on a path of independent scientific research. Because of no funds for his scientific research, he cheats his father of his public funds, which eventually leads to his father's suicide because he cannot return the appropriated money. His academic arrogance is pushed to the extreme step by step by his up-swelling selfish desire. He believes that once a person has the ability of invisibility, he would have unlimited power and freedom. The research progress of Griffin in invisibility can be divided into three stages: first, invisibility of a white wool fabric; second, invisibility of a cat, and third, invisibility of human body. Because there is no scientific research fund to buy experimental products, he treats himself as an experimental object of his own medicine. After numerous experiments, he succeeds in entering himself into invisible by keeping his stomach in a state of starvation. His research results often lead to people's misunderstanding, so he is forced to move frequently. Griffin's research result in the field of invisibility is still in the semi-finished stage in the novel, and has not achieved complete success. Generally speaking, if a functional drug is figured out, it must have certain corresponding antidotes, or else it cannot enter the use stage. Griffin's chemicals enable his body to be in an invisible state, but he has not yet developed a drug to eliminate this invisible state. That is to say, he cannot convert a human body from invisibility to visibility as he wishes. At first, he is intoxicated with his research achievements and enjoys his invisible state. However, he gradually discovers that invisibility causes him to be isolated from society. He cannot go out to work as usual and earn money to support him. Therefore, it is impossible for him to integrate into the society again and his life is in crisis. In this case, he does not seek help from the society, but makes use of the advantage of invisibility to raise living expenses and research funds by stealing, and finally embarks on the road of robbery and murder. The whole

novel is about the conflict between him and his society after he is transformed. In the conflict, he neglects the usual communication with others, obsessed with his own scientific research. Finally, he becomes more and more alienated and estranged from other people encountered in his life.

Similar to White Bone Demon, Griffin suffers “three beatings” after he becomes an invisible man. First of all, Griffin’s stealing of the priest’s house is discovered. The village constable rushes to the hotel Griffin lives in to arrest him after receiving the villagers’ report. Griffin resists arrest and is beaten by the constable and other villagers. In his dilemma, Griffin uses his skill of invisibility to escape, just like the skill of physical body departure of White Bone Demon. It might be called the first beating suffered by Griffin. The blow makes open the contradiction between Griffin and society. The second beating of Griffin takes place in a bar. Griffin chases Marvell, a local wanderer, because Marvell has stolen his research notebooks. Griffin’s pursuit causes a great panic in the streets, and the police station again gets reports from villagers, so they surround the bar and besiege Griffin. In the fierce struggle, Griffin is seriously injured. Although he finally escapes, his living space is getting smaller and smaller. The third beating of Griffin occurs on the street. Griffin angrily chases his old classmate Kemp in the street who has sold him to the police, but is surrounded by the local people who regard Griffin as a monster. A navy breaks his head with a shovel and kills him on the spot. Like White Bone Demon killed by the Monkey King, Griffin gradually shows his original shape after his death: he is a 30-year-old man afflicted with albanism. In fact, the local people have been regarding Griffin, who has the skill of turning himself invisible, as a demon similar to White Bone Demon.

White Bone Demon wants to immortalize herself through the eating of the meat of Tang Sanzang, so her idea challenges the rulers of the Heavenly Court. By contrast, Griffin wants to gain absolute authority and freedom by mastering his skill of invisibility, and challenges the mainstream society represented by Dr. Kemp. However, both of them have violated the will of God: White Bone Demon violates the will of Tathagata Buddha, the Oriental “God” and tries every means to murder and eat Tang Sanzang, while Griffin violates the will of Jehovah, the Western “God” and runs after the unlimited power of an individual.^[11] However, both in the East and in the West, only the Tathagata Buddha and the Jehovah have omnipresent power. Therefore, their tragedy is not only a tragedy of personal failure, but also a tragedy of the destruction of human rights by the unreasonable social system.

Therefore, the purpose of Wu Cheng-en’s writing in *Journey to the West* is to reflect people’s progressive thought of pursuing democracy, equality and freedom and criticize the dark rule of feudal autocracy through the stories about monsters, demons, ghosts or gods. Wu Cheng-en lived in the dark period of literary inquisition of the mid- and late Ming Dynasty, and the society had a strict and cruel control of the scholars’ thoughts and any subtle offense of the royal power might be detected by the imperial secret agents and resulted in the end of their life. The writing of *Journey to the West* has to be filled with myths. Wu Cheng-en uses the descriptions of gods and Buddha to criticize the feudal monarchy at that time, and uses demons and monsters to allude to various decadent and corrupted officials at that time. Through this layer of veil, readers can understand the author’s profound implications and explore his hidden and real creative intentions. In contrast, the purpose of Wells’ *The Invisible Man* is to reveal the conflict between scientific invention and human civilization through the tragedy of some personal struggle. Griffin’s experiences of being beaten three times are also the three tribulations on her road of seeking freedom and conducting scientific research.^[12] Like White Bone Demon, Griffin fails to escape the third fatal “beating” and becomes a sacrifice to the unreasonable social system.

Conclusion:

The story of the “three beatings of White Bone Demon” contains rich ideological connotations, which can give readers multi-dimensional inspiration. Although it is impossible to verify whether Wells’ description of the “three beatings of Griffin” has received certain influence from Wu Cheng-en, Griffin created by Wells is by no means a simple repetition of the “White Bone Demon” in *The Invisible Man*. Griffin in Wells’ writing is plumper and more believable than White Bone Demon in Wu Cheng-en’s novel. White Bone Demon’s ability of deformation and invisibility is the product of the author’s imagination, which has no scientific basis and no empirical evidence in real life. By Contrast, Griffin’s invisibility has a certain scientific background, which turns what scientists pursue and explore into reality in the literary space, so it has a certain scientific foresight. Through Griffin’s life experience, Wells shows that irrational reverie can take a lead in the people’s rational thinking, but the progress of science is also characterized by its advance, limitation and destructiveness. Both White Bone Demon and Griffin have suffered social exclusion and fatal attack, experienced “three beatings,” and finally lost their lives in violence. Both of them are victims of their own times. Their death demonstrates that the extreme pursuit of individualism beyond reality is destructive and dangerous. The coincidence of the plot of “three beatings of White Bone Demon” and “three beatings of Griffin” and the comparability of the fates of the two characters show that social rebels are always misunderstood or even hated by society. Although they are not perfect in their personality, their unfortunate experiences enable us to recognize the dark side of social development, the solipsism of seeking individual interests and the limitation in self-realization.

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