

From Utopian Visions to Dystopian Realities: H.G. Wells's Legacy in Postmodern Science Fiction.

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Abstract

H.G. Wells, a revolutionary figure in speculative fiction, his scientific romance is incredibly and skilfully fantasizing the thematic concern of utopia and dystopia with unparalleled depth and foresight in his literary works. This research paper explores Wells' exploration of utopian ideals and their eventual succession into dystopian realities. Through influential works such as *The Time Machine*, and *The War of the World* H. G. Wells constructs and deconstructs utopian societies, representing their fundamental flaws and vulnerabilities. He evaluates and criticise on the prevailing social, political, and scientific standards and also warning against the modern science and technology. Wells' narrative approach combines scientific speculation with philosophical inquiry, offering thoughtful visions and perceptions into the human condition, class divisions and the fragility of societal structures. The researcher in this research paper also examines Wells' stable relevance as a writer who challenged his readers to confront the complexities of idealism and the dark undercurrents of human ambition, resonating deeply in contemporary discussions on society and its future trajectories.

Keywords: - Utopian and Dystopian, Science and technology, speculation, Environment fantasy and imagination, postmodernism and Future World

Introduction

The word 'utopia' is taken from Greek word of 'eutopos' which means "the good place" or ou topos, "no place". The word dystopia is contrasting visions of future societies discovered broadly in science fiction literature. Utopias depict an imagination communities where social harmony, brotherhood, equality, peace, justice, happiness, friendship on world level and

advanced science and technology create near-perfect living conditions throughout the world. Examples like T
 As above discussed, the concepts of such fantasy and idealized imaginative society created in the by the writers and scientist considering the unauthorised and prevailing system of totalitarian and elite class, upper caste and other who hold the power and exploited the main stream of the society. Richard Gerver, in his *Utopian fantasy*, observes that “utopian creation tends to be fantastic because their civilization is so unheard of that they cannot be placed anywhere on earth without being widely incongruous...” (Bartter, 11). For such inspiration it pays the way for such great authors like H.G. Wells who observed that “throughout the ages the utopian reflects the anxieties and the discontents amidst which they were produced. (Bartter, 11). Paul Ricoeur observes and suggests that at “a time when everything is blocked by system which have failed but which cannot by beaten...utopian is our resource. It may e an escape, (Bartter, 11).

In the postmodernism and post structuralism world there is considerable debate and discussion on the terminology of utopianism and its impact on the contrary world of dystopian and it is considered as a rebellion against elemental and ideological tyrannies of the oppressor and power hold on the marginalized on the bases of gender discrimination, racism, language and symbols. The best examples is, Helene Cixous’s *Le Nom d’ Oedipus* (The Name of the Oedipus 1978) and Christina Wolf’s *Cassandra myth, Kasandra* (1983) Both famous authors of feminism in postmodern who wrote and express the tyranny of the totalitarian and oppressors on the suppressed people particularly the gender discrimination and colour discrimination in the dystopian world, these all tyranny and brutality within a society compel the whole society to escape such world which is full of oppressors and materialistic kind of society. Utopian literature characteristically considered an isolate fundamental of present-day reality that need improvement, and it then invokes worlds regarding stability of future world. The Utopian concept and idea are not related to a particular phenomenon but the relation of this term leads towards various fields for examples there are lots of utopian concerns which are as, The Ecological utopian regarding the environment where the present worlds and its climate and natural resources no longer face the dire crises they do today. The feminist utopias consider the worlds and the society where there is no gender discrimination, men and women are fully equal and technological utopias depict advancements in computing, robotics, science and technology and transportation that are mere dreams for the betterment of the society instead of harmful the whole humanity.

The difference between two conceptual terms of utopian and dystopian is that, the Utopian

fantastical and imagination fictions are set in a perfect and flawless world, where is everything is perfect and

The Dystopian concepts in the scientific romance, *The Time Machine* (1895). H.G. Wells had a farsighted visionary power so the protagonist of the story, an unnamed time traveller who explores the things through his scientific tools that is called, Time Machine. Through such tool the time traveller convinced his companions and then travels far and reached to the future world. H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine* it is a clear picture of a dystopian world. In this science fiction, a scientist through a time machine travels to future. On reaching there, he finds that two different kinds of species: the childlike *Eloi* and the monstrous *Morlocks*. His machine disappears, so he discovers the future world. After narrowly escaping he encounters the *Morlocks* species, the Time Traveller recovers his machine and journeys further forward to the world's end before returning to his own time. Soon after, he embarks on another trip, never to return again. Wells much influenced by Thomas Henry Huxley, who is known an advocate for Darwin's theory of evolution which later became the base for his scientific romances and the vision for the concept of science and technology throughout his literary work. Wells is not only considered a science fiction writer but also known as a great social commentator. During World War II, he drafted "The Rights of Man," which later influenced the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The 19th-century in Britain witness many problems in the society like, injustice to the working class, injustice with feminism, and lots of other protests were going on for the exploitation of mass by the authority and utilitarian power system. Wells's intention and vision for democratic socialism was predicated on his belief that class divisions were incompatible with scientific advancement. Wells's protagonist, the Time Traveller follows the scientific method and techniques of hypothesis and experimentation for reaching far into future time of 802.701 and finds the same conditions of the society. *The Time Machine* is a dystopian science fiction in a style of narrative, the author imagines a dark rather than utopian future for society and grounds those ideas in scientific principles and theories.

The Time Traveller observes a number of disgusting things and noted that the only standing structures appeared to be large, castle-like buildings; there were no single-family homes. He thought of communism of the contemporary time period. Further observing the things meticulously at the group of a creatures following him, he did not find out the difference between male and female, and no signs of age or disease. Everyone wore the same style of clothing. He considered how these things might make sense. Without hardship or danger. *The*

Time Machine is a dystopian science fiction tale. H.G. Wells's concepts of fantasy in such and imagination o

The historical background at the end of the 19th century in Britain was a time of great technological development and socioeconomic disturbances and upheaval. The main cause of the industrial revolution and mass manufacturing and consumption of goods. There were enormous turmoil and hustle and bustle in England, The Irish people were demanding freedom from England. Women were fighting for the right to vote. Workers were exploited and they formed trade unions to fight against too-long hours, poor pay and dangerous employment conditions. Indeed, the so-called labour question with its sometimes-violent clashes between working class and labours and factory owners on the bases of wages and justice. While a some laws passed during the early and middle parts of the 19th century for improving working class conditions slightly especially for women and children – social and economic divisions remained same. Some organization the middle and upper classes thought for the necessity of further reforms to help labourers continue to improve their circumstances. Others, however, persisted in viewing the working classes in purely Darwinesque terms – that is, seeing their ignorance and poverty as a manifestation of their inherent degradation.

Class conflicts also coincided with evolving theories about society's relationship with both science and politics. In literature, the question of how class conflicts would resolve themselves was a popular one. Utopian stories such as Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) – wherein a man wakes from a hypnotic sleep in the year 2000 to discover America has become a socialist utopia, utterly free of class-based issues and William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) – which portrays a future where all work has become pleasurable and there is difference between human being on the bases of class divisions. The dystopian works like *The Time Machine* which posit degeneration, rather than continued, positive evolution as mankind's future state – were a response to the utopian fiction trend.

The initial encouragement for Wells's notion of the above-versus-below-ground divide between the classes which would occupy a central place in *The Time Machine* came from the author's own childhood. During the period when Wells's father owned a shop, the family passed much of their free time in an underground basement space. Too, at the main house of the country estate, Uppark, where Wells's mother worked as a lady's maid, Likewise, these early experiences directed Wells's developing socialist ideas another core aspect of *The Time Machine*. In his *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934), Wells observes that his support for democratic socialism was predicated on his belief that the "existing political and social

structures” were fundamentally “incompatible” with “scientific and industrial progress.”

H.G. Wells also influenced the idea of time travelling by the most notable author, Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) as well as more contemporary utopian works. Wells started playing with the impression and fantastical idea of time travel a number of years before writing *The Time Machine*. Another short story, “The Chronic Argonauts” which like *The Time Machine* also focused on the same thematic concern of that an inventor who builds a time machine, was published in the Royal College of Science student magazine, *The Science Schools Journal* in 1888. Wells’s main concern for the exploration of future world, keeping in the mind for the contemporary society and rapidly development of science and technology.

Wells’s Observation regarding social inequality he agreed with the beliefs and prevailing system of socialism and often wrote against the class division of contemporary society. As already above discussed such concepts in his scientific romance regarding the species, the Eloi and the Morlocks in his 1895 *The Time Machine*. Wells' strong beliefs in and support of Darwin's theory of evolution either led him to believe or stopped from his persistence curiosity that it was possible for humankind to live together peacefully here on the earth, which strongly reveals the utopian angle of his mind that led him to write down a book. *A Modern Utopia* (1905). In a positive sense, an incredible science fiction, *The War of the Worlds* is not utopian, but the setting and the narrative style of the story about the details of the invasion lead towards the fantastically and imagination to utopian cultures of both the *Martians* and the *English* are on the edge of suspension. In Wells' *The Outline of History*, he says, "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." This quote actually taken from Henry James’s 1900 book, *Love and Mr Lewisham*. This idea becomes true for both the alien and English cultures. Almost all his literary works focus on science, technology and mechanization, such mindset that makes many of his books and novels, including *The War of the Worlds*, utopian or dystopian in nature.

Wells wrote the famous science fiction, *The War of the Worlds* (1898) in response to the historical events of the time period leading up to the turn of the century. For examples from the text itself. “No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man’s and yet as mortal as his own concern...” (Wells, 9). The last five years of the century were home to some interesting mechanical discoveries, for instances early motion pictures, electric power, X-rays, luminous lighting, loudspeakers, and key radio improvements. This environment of

discovery influenced and captured Wells' imagination and fantasy power that led to the literary invention and *The War of the World*, shines a mixed light on technological and mechanical improvements. On the optimistic side, technology is what makes the alien invaders superior to the English armies and would have been the end of English culture if not for the unanticipated effects of earthly bacteria on the aliens. The characters in this speculative dystopian science fiction feared their technological power and mechanism and there was nothing the inferior English culture could do in the face of such advanced intelligence. Such notion of the writer in the story shows the necessity of science for the maintenance, propagation and an advancement of a culture. On the pessimistic point of view, the technology and mechanism power allow the alien to invade into the earth and to destroy its culture. Wells's notion that there should be no class division within a society and his strong belief that all of humanity is equal, that it is illogical and biasness for one group of people to abolish or subjugate another culture and their identity because of their technological inferiority. To Wells, technology should not be the main focus of a society, but a thread exists in this novel that suggests that unless a country keeps up with the technology of the world, that country will ultimately be devastated by that same technology. It is this reverent fear that perhaps explains his theoretical invention of technologies with such destructive capabilities.

In the science fiction, *The War of the World*. The idea of defeating the aliens has led many to reader and the young scientists as well as the modern science fiction writers to read the novel as an assessment on the colonial expansion of England. The reader is constantly warned that "before of (the aliens) too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals . . . but upon its inferior races" (Wells, 5). The Tasmanians, who "in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants" (Wells, 15) are an example of the development that was so harmful to many areas. The future underground revolution that the artilleryman suggests parallels alike revolutions that happened in India and other former countries of the English Commonwealth. "As Martian supplants man, it becomes evident that their monstrosity only mirrors our own" (Draper, 51).

At the end, after the aliens have been defeated by the surprising bacteria, the plot switches from an invasion focus to a rebuilding one. The starting over process is common in utopian literature, principally because of the need of a clean attack in order for the new ideals to sink

in. Wells has fantasy about the England and somehow regarding the whole world at a point that, in the conse

Conclusion

As on the above research of two science and speculative fiction in the perspectives and themes on the base of utopian and dystopian concern. H.G. Wells remains perhaps the most acclaimed science fiction author of all time but not simply because of the entertainment value of his literature. The scientific realism he so often used has become a principal for science fiction of today and potential future sciences. In a world of increasing multi-cultural sensitivity, the potential threads regarding England's colonial expansion certainly add an interesting twist to *The War of the Worlds* as an already historically significant visionary and far-sighted work that warns of the no-longer awaiting danger of the German forces. Whether this scientific romance is not completely utopian in nature, but its parts offer understanding and awareness into an English culture of the past while staying remarkably pertinent in discussions of the present-day world culture. Wells's proof it the concepts of utopian fantasy actually leads to the contemporary of England and rest of the world have been struggling for their basic rights and other requisites even in the modern time so, the utopian is merely an imaginary world actually the whole world is just like a dystopian world and completely the contrary the fantasy and hypothetical world that is not feasible until the whole world would not work for the sake of humanity and for the sake of the protection of the earth planet.

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