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Ideological bias and reaction to contemporary events in
H.G. Wells post-great-war works

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is three-fold. The first aim is the overall intention of the thesis, to study Wells' lesser known works and understand their purpose. The texts analysed in the following chapters are the less well-known and less scrutinised of Wells' texts and the analysis will expand the critical body on Wells in a meaningful way. Wells' earlier works have an existing body of well-respected and well-established literature dedicated to them. However, his later texts have been over-looked. This thesis will address that problem.

The two following aims are more focussed. The second aim is to demonstrate how Wells' ideological bias affected his work. Whilst not an exceedingly controversial point it is crucial for a deeper understanding of how his later works act as reaction to events. It also naturally leads to the final point. The thesis will argue Wells was such a dedicated socialist that as contemporary history unfolded around him it was so inimical to his perceived vision that he was forced to defend his utopian future in the form of fiction.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signed:

Date: 02/10/2017

University of Glasgow
2017

Ideological Bias and Reaction to Contemporary Events in H.G.Wells' post-great-war works

This thesis will examine the relationship between H.G. Wells' political beliefs and the content of his utopian fiction in his later career. To do so the thesis will use three of Wells' utopian fictions published after the first world war. The intention here is two-fold. Firstly, it is hoped that this will benefit the academic body as Wells' later work is often overlooked in favour of his earlier texts.

Secondly, this thesis intends to demonstrate that Wells was so stridently socialist that he responded to events through his socialist fiction, to defend his beliefs from contemporary incidents that would undermine them. In so doing, the thesis will demonstrate that Wells often blurred the line between his fiction and non-fiction with both being deeply political and utopian. From the release of *Anticipations* (1901) followed shortly by *A Modern Utopia* (1905) Wells was famously a socialist. He argued that in the relatively near future mankind would begin to move away from nation states and empires toward a single world-state in an effort to bring about socialism across the planet. This would, Wells believed, result in a world-wide utopia. However, the period in which Wells wrote his utopian fiction was heavily war-torn and suffered various calamities. Even as he wrote on how the future utopia was an inevitability the world was struggling to recover from the effects of the first world war. The world itself seemed at odds with Wells' beliefs. This ultimately results in Wells' fiction acting as proselytization for his belief in a socialist utopia.

The Salvaging of Civilisation (1921) and *The Way The World is Going* (1928) both serve as examples of non-fiction utopian writings. They act as both prediction and suggestion for the future, arguing for a socialist world-state. This is done, Wells argues, through the combined action of intelligent individuals across the planet who would rise to positions of power in order to take control and educate the world on the benefits of socialism. However, Wells' non-fiction does not provide us with the questions his fiction does. It seems unnecessary for Wells to use fiction to promote socialist ideology when non-fiction can promote the same concept. The reason, this thesis will argue, is propaganda. These are aspects that Wells' non-fiction shares with the three texts this thesis will

interrogate. His prophetic works and his speculative science fiction both share so many traits it can be difficult to separate them which leads to the central argument of this thesis. His non-fiction is explicit whereas his fiction can be read innocuously whilst still advocating socialism.

That Wells' speculative fiction is highly influenced by his socialist ideology is not contentious but is an important point to prove to support the claim of this thesis. The claim being that whilst Wells believed in a utopian socialist future, contemporary political and social events challenged that belief, forcing him to defend his ideology through his fiction. This establishes the purpose of thesis. Both his utopian fiction and his non-fiction defend Wells' imagined future from contemporary events and movements that by their existence challenge his assertions. The thesis will demonstrate how Wells' utopian fiction was not only directly born and influenced by his belief in and desire for a utopian world state, but that they also serve as reactions to Wells' social and political reality. As the years passed and various events seemed to threaten his ideal future Wells was forced to contextualise these events and problems as part of his utopian mythos to maintain its legitimacy as a genuine ideal, rather than relegate it to mere fiction. One of the primary ways he did this was by establishing the Age of Confusion. This refers to a tumultuous era of humanity that must be passed through in order to reach utopia. It is present in all three texts this thesis examines despite no actual narrative links between them. This thesis will establish the Age of Confusion as a key term within Wells' utopian fiction as a means of explaining the chaos of his time and how it was not in fact an indicator against socialism. This will set the thesis alongside the larger body of academic work and fill the gap in research in Wells studies. Patrick Parrinder and Simon James are both well-known authorities on Wells and have each contributed vastly influential studies that help situate and inform our understanding of Wells and his work. However, much of the academic body focusses to a greater degree on Wells' earlier work. Whilst there is a considerable body of critical work on late nineteenth century scientific romances, such as *The Time Machine* (1895) and *War of the Worlds* (1897), relatively few critics have addressed the work Wells wrote after the First World War. This has left a

gap in research for a focussed study on Wells' post-war work that grapples with why his later work was so political.

It is not a contentious point to argue that H.G. Wells was a political writer. After he published *Anticipations* (1901), his first prophetic socialist text, his work gradually slewed from science fiction to political proselytising. *Anticipations* is a non-fiction text in which Wells predicts various changes to society and mankind that were to come in the future. His predictions ranged from the rise of automobiles and busses to cities disappearing. He joined the Fabian society two years after, a society that was and remains today a group dedicated to socialism without revolution instead using reform and gradual change.¹ As time wore on his opposition to received wisdom and the standard way in which society was run became clearer in his work². His political leanings were certainly no secret, and he wrote extensively espousing what he believed to be the future of mankind³. The future he foresaw was a socialist utopia that encompassed the globe, a world state. This is reflected in both his fiction and his non-fiction. The former across a number of different texts describes an open cabal positioning themselves throughout society in order to direct it toward socialism. In his non-fiction, this series of events is paralleled as Wells predicts that in his own time certain men were rising up furtively:

A world-wide process of social and moral deliquescence is in progress, and that a really social body of engineering, managing men, scientifically trained, and having common ideals and interests, is likely to segregate and disentangle itself from our present confusion.⁴

That this series of events is paralleled in texts such as *The Shape of Things To Come* demonstrates how similar and sometimes indistinguishable Wells non-fictional political writing was from his fiction. It is only the earliest example of Wells using the word confusion to refer to his own era and is perhaps the origins of the concept of the Age of Confusion. Whether in novels or his journalism⁵

¹ George Thomson, (1 March 1976). "The Tindemans Report and the European Future" Address to the European Movement, Brussels, p.1.

² James, S, (2012). *Maps of Utopia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.157.

³ H.G. Wells, (1914). *The World Set Free*. London: Macmillan and Co. Limited.

⁴ H.G. Wells, (2016). *Anticipations - Of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human life and Thought*. London: Read Books Ltd

⁵ H.G. Wells, (1925) *A Year of Prophecy*, New York: Macmillan. p.1

Wells seemed convinced that mankind was destined to reach a socialist utopia. It is unclear what exactly led him to this belief. Perhaps his own history of social mobility⁶ and high regard of science and education, all aspects that play great roles in his pantheon of utopias. Across all his written work Wells seemed certain mankind was destined to create its own heaven on earth.

The first world war is the prime example of the challenge to Wells' utopian beliefs. Wells did not, as one might expect, object to the conflict: in fact he argued for Britain's intervention in his writing as he believed this was a step toward defeating imperialism.⁷ Wells thought it important to distinguish the cause and the object of the war. The cause was Germany invading Belgium, but the object Wells believed was to resoundingly defeat Prussian imperialism and its intentions on the rest of Europe. Aside from immediate political concerns however as the conflict wore on this presented Wells with an issue. It remained his belief that mankind was driving towards utopia. But how could this be the case in a world driven apart by nation states and where people were forced to murder each other in the millions. Even as the Russian Revolution occurred four years later it was not the socialism Wells envisioned, with a profound level of chaos and disorder⁸. This might drive one to abandon one's belief in the desire for parity and peace amongst one's fellow man. This was not the case with Wells, but the problem remained. He was forced to weave the horror into the foundation of the future utopia. This is exactly what Wells did through the concept of the Age of Confusion. The Age of Confusion is an era in which people across the planet all feel as though they are on a precipice, with a great new age just beyond their imagination. This confusion leads to conflict and death on a greater scale than ever seen before. This is how Wells used the reality of his context as part of his utopian mythology.

To demonstrate that Wells' utopian fiction is not only representative of Wells' political views but actively responding and reacting to outside influence that might discredit them, this thesis will focus

⁶ Mackenzie, N. and Mackenzie, J. (1973). *The Time Traveller: The Life of H.G. Wells*. London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, p.39.

⁷ H.G. Wells, (1915) 'Why Britain Went to War', in *The War Illustrated Album De Luxe. Volume 1: The First Phase*, ed. by J.A. Hammerton. London: The Amalgamated Press, p. 10.

⁸ Orlando Figes, (1996) *People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924*. Johnathan Cape, p.623.

on three primary themes across three of Wells most comprehensive utopian fictions. The first theme is that of war, in particular the first world war but as time progresses and the war to end all war seems not to have done so, this theme branches out. Wells was well-versed in writing on conflict with *The War of the Worlds* (1897), *The War in the Air* (1908) and *Tono-Bungay* (1909) all preceding the first world war which Wells went on to write about in *The War that will End War* (1914). Wells writes from both a contemporary and utopian perspective offering two views of conflict. One is aghast at the atrocity committed against one's fellow man and is primarily allocated to the future utopia, being so advanced they see even the relatively civilised time of Wells as barbaric. The second, and the more pragmatic point that Wells concludes with in his texts is that the conflicts of his time are an unpleasant but necessary stage in human evolution. The second theme is that of education which was a particularly personal point to Wells. He considered himself under-educated even when he was writing textbooks on biology and the sciences.⁹ This theme of education in his fiction reflects that as he writes, arguing that the entire world population is being educated incorrectly. Part of Wells's utopias that remains consistent across his many texts is that worldwide education reform is necessary to bring about utopia. This is combined with his belief in socialist propaganda, essentially pre-programming the youth to believe in and practice socialism. The final theme is that of religion. Wells' position changed over the course of his life. In his earlier writings Wells is ambivalent toward religion and in his writing, he states he simply has no need for or interest in it.¹⁴ As time passed there was a religious resurgence against the ever-rising tide of scientific inquiry leading Wells' position and by extension his fiction's position on religion to change. Wells' later utopian fiction is actively hostile to religion and he writes of regimes that stamp it out to bring about utopia. This is a key example of how Wells' fiction directly refers to his context and is shaped by his need to defend utopia from attack. Throughout the exploration of these themes Wells' reaction to contextual social and political shifts will be discussed as part of Wells' defence of utopia.

⁹ H.G. Wells, (1893) *Text-book of Biology*, London: W. B. Clive & Co., University Correspondence College Press.

¹⁰ H. G. Wells, (1908) *First & last things; a confession of faith and rules of life*. New York: Putnam, p. 77–80.

The three texts I will make use of are *Men Like Gods* (1923) *The Dream* (1924) and *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933). These texts all provide crucial insight into how Wells' ideology affected his fiction and the effects of history on his work. The first text details an adventure into a parallel universe, thousands of years ahead of ours which the inhabitants call Utopia. It is populated entirely by polymaths who live happy lives engaging in artistic or research pursuits of their own choice. The characters of Earth who interact with Utopians serve to critique Wells' period and various archetypes of the time whilst simultaneously expounding the virtues of Utopia. In a Socratic dialogue, the Earthling characters have their notions as to what makes a good society questioned and disproved allowing Wells to situate Utopia as far superior to Earth. *The Dream* approaches this from the alternate perspective, with its protagonist being a man living in a utopia of the far future dreaming the entire life of a man living at the turn of the century. As he recounts his life back to his companions the barbaric nature of Victorian life horrifies them. As the narrative continues the character remarks upon the various problems of the time from poor education to the first world war. This allows the text to decry the problems of Wells' era and demonstrate that utopia can still emerge from such a troubled society. The final text is a 'future history' describing a timeline from the early 20th century leading into the year 2106 in which utopia is been achieved. This text contains the most parallels with Wells' prophetic writings and blurs the line between speculative non-fiction and science fiction. Each change in society is written as an inevitable step on the road to utopia including unpleasantness and bloodshed. This text deals with much of the changes that occurred over the 1920s including the slow build to what Wells believed would be and eventually became the second world war. Rather than treat this as a failure of his ideology this and other counter-productive elements are written in as part of the steps toward utopia. It is in this way Wells contextualises history both positive and negative as a part of his narrative and makes use of the fictional form to play out his non-fictional beliefs.

Chapter One: Men Like Gods

Men Like Gods (1923) details an alternate reality, one in which mankind has freed itself from the political and social discord H.G Wells' period suffered from. This alternate planet is thousands of years more advanced than Earth and has a history similar but slightly different in certain ways. The coming of Christ in their world preceded a scientific revolution and he was executed on a wheel not a cross. Most crucially they look back on a period in their own history analogous to that of fin-de-siècle England and refer to it as the 'Age of Confusion'. As previously discussed this is what allows Wells to engage in a Socratic dialogue with the values of Utopia and Earth. In doing so the flaws and savagery of Wells' own time are criticised and the virtues of Utopia demonstrated.

The novel captures the strange swing between pessimism and optimism of Wells' writing; criticism of an unsatisfactory present with hope for a utopian future. William J. Sheick, writing on Wells' later works argues this was in part what led to Wells' decline in popularity. The general resistance of society to believe in a utopian fate for humanity after the horrors of world war one is, Sheick claims, the reason for his fall from prominence¹¹. This is supported by the fiction of Wells' contemporaries Woolf and Lawrence which is deeply pessimistic in the wake of the Great War. Not only this, but his writing came under criticism for its deeply political nature, most notably by Woolf herself who claimed it made the actual focus of his writing vague¹². Rather than have a greater understanding of the particular, she claims Wells focusses on the general. This criticism holds some truth in that one can easily see the criticisms Wells makes upon his own society as well as the various suggestions for reform that come in the shape of the superior Utopian society which is more general than specific. However, the criticism that this makes his work vague is provably false despite the barely veiled political content. Wells demonstrates the problems of his time through his characters and solves

¹¹ William. J. Sheick, (1984) *The Splintering Frame: The Later Fiction Of H.G. Wells*, Victoria: ELS Monograph Series, p. 9.

¹² Virginia Woolf, (2005) 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', in *Modernism: An Anthology*, ed. by Lawrence Rainey Oxford: Blackwell, p.902.

them through his future society. The narrative can be read straightforwardly as a thesis on societal improvement. Throughout Wells makes extensive comparisons demonstrating the benefits of socialism and the drawbacks of contemporary society. He even goes into detail as to how to transition from the inferior system to the superior making both predictions and suggestions as to the future of mankind. This chapter will demonstrate the ways in which Wells does this whilst dealing with his own societal problems as part of the Age of Confusion. This will be done in four sections. The first will be to demonstrate the various ways in which Wells distances Utopia from Earth and uses the dialogue between the characters to criticise Earth norms. By doing this Wells can criticise his own period yet still contextualise mistakes and problems as possible on the road to utopia. The following sections will follow the three themes discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Both the Great War and the Russian civil war affect the narrative and Wells uses both as part of the problems of Earth and the history of Utopia. Much of the text deals with the education of the two worlds and the inferiority of Earth serves as an explanation for discord and conflict. Finally, religion plays a role in the text with the Utopians' lack of religiosity offending some of the Earth characters but also giving insight into Wells' position on religion.

Men Like Gods (referred to after as *Gods*) opens with the central character Mr Barnstaple struck by the depressing malaise of his modern life. As a journalist, he writes for the Liberal, a particularly pessimistic newspaper whose owner does not believe in writing on progress. This is an important situation of the character as it not only frames him as already embedded in political discourse and commentary but it also aligns him with Wells who was himself a progressive journalist. Whilst it would be simplistic to argue that Wells has written himself into the narrative Barnstaple represents the middle-class writer's opinion that makes him more politically like Wells than the other Earth characters. Barnstaple's home life is dominated by his rowdy sons who have no interest in politics and intellectual discussion and the world at large suffers just as badly: 'Everywhere, there was conflict, everywhere unreason; seven-eighths of the world seemed to be sinking down towards

chronic disorder and social dissolution'.¹³ Set in 1921 Mr Barnstaple's unease regarding the state of the world is understandable given the lasting effects of the first world war. Whilst not referenced directly in this quote it is both implied and later stated that the general unrest and disorganisation is the result of the war. Wells writes this novel in 1921-3, immersed in the zeitgeist of unrest. During the war Lawrence wrote: 'I think there is no future for England: only a decline and fall. This is the dreadful and unbearable part of it: To have been born in a decadent era, a decline of life, a collapsing of civilisation'.¹⁴ Whilst written in response to a work of his own having been suppressed it speaks to the era and attitudes toward modern life in England. This negativity was not confined to England alone however. Not only was the cost of the war great in terms of lives lost, the expense across the empire was ruinous. The colonies, as a result of a sweeping tide of nationalism began to resent British rule. This occurred across Asia, India and the Middle East between 1919 and 1922.¹⁵ In this context Barnstaple's perception of 'chronic disorder and social dissolution' does not merely set the scene but is Wells' way of condemning the current state of the empire. Mr Barnstaple makes no effort to improve his situation nor that of those around him. His reaction is to take a holiday and flee. Despite being aware of the sorry state of contemporary politics Mr Barnstaple is very much a man born of the Age of Confusion. He knows that there is something wrong with the state of the world but it is beyond him as to how to remedy it.

The Age of Confusion is a key concept not only within *Gods* but in the other texts this thesis will interrogate. It is a term used by Wells across all these texts to identify a point in human history at which society struggles under the pressure to at once be civilised as well as deal with the uglier aspects of the human condition. It is also crucial narratively speaking in differentiating the two parties of the text. It is a well-established trope of Utopian fiction for characters from two societies

¹³ H.G Wells, (1923) *Men Like Gods*, London: Cassell and Company Ltd, p. 5.

¹⁴ Vincent B. Sherry, (2015). *Modernism and The Reinvention of Decadence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p.139.

¹⁵ John Gallagher, (1981) "Nationalisms And The Crisis Of Empire, 1919–1922", *Modern Asian Studies*, 15, 355, p.368.

to debate the merits of each. This is true from Moore to Morris and is mirrored in the following scene in which the Victorian world is explained and later contrasted with Utopia:

Mr Burleigh was giving Utopia a brief account of the world of men, seeking to be elementary and lucid and reasonable, telling them of states and empires, of wars and the Great War, of economic organization and disorganisation, of revolutions and Bolshevism, of the terrible Russian famine that was beginning, of the difficulties of finding honest statesmen and officials, and of the unhelpfulness of newspapers, of all the dark and troubled spectacle of human life.¹⁶

The list given is exhaustive and paints a negative picture of the post-great-war world, focussing on political upheaval and societal failure. All the references to events are historical including the Russian famine which would last for almost two years during which this text was written.¹⁷ The passage above makes reference to several historical events. This prompts the question as to why Wells would make use of genuine calamities when describing a fictional version of his own period. Realism may have played some small factor but the text and its narrative are not wholly concerned with realism. It is more likely however that this is part of the Socratic dialogue Wells is attempting to create by criticising the political climate that surrounded him. When the world of Utopia is described it is described in decidedly simple terms without reference to any conflict or strife: "The activities of our world" said Uthred, "are all coordinated to secure the general freedom... We have a number of intelligences directed to the general psychology of the race" (*Gods*, 1923, p.58). The descriptions of Utopia when read in contrast with those of Earth are striking in their simplicity. Whilst Earth politics is described as a mass of intersecting political agendas and conflicts. Utopia can be described in a few sentences much to the shock of those listening. This exchange between the two parties is part of the Socratic dialogue the text presents and remains typically one-sided throughout. This dialogue is the inhabitants of Utopia engaging in education both narratively and meta-textually. They educate the people of Earth by hearing their descriptions of their politics and society, in turn presenting their

¹⁶ H.G Wells, (1923) *Men Like Gods*, London: Cassell and Company Ltd, p. 52.

¹⁷ Brian Crozier, (1987) *Socialism*, London: Sherwood, p. 69.

own which is so superior it is presented without argument. This also educates the reader on the merits of socialist Utopia. The following passage demonstrates this:

“Well isn’t that group of intelligences a governing class?” said Mr. Burleigh. “Not in the sense that they exercise any arbitrary will,” Said Urthred. “They deal with general relations, that is all”... “This is a republic indeed!” said Mr. Burleigh. “But how it works and how it came about I cannot imagine. Your state is probably a highly socialistic one?” “You still live in a world in which nearly everything except the air, the high roads, the high seas and the wilderness is privately owned?” “We do,” Said Mr. Catskill. “Owned-and competed for.” “We have been through that stage. We found at last that private property in all but very personal things was an intolerable nuisance to mankind’ (*Gods*, 1923, p.58-59).

As this passage reveals the two speakers by exchanging information demonstrate to the reader the superior nature of the Utopian society. By framing socialism as a later stage this implies the inferiority of Earth. This repeats itself in a few different circumstances for example on the topic of population control: “And you dare to regulate increase! You control it! Your women consent to bear children as they are needed- or refrain!” “Of course,” said Urthred. “Why not?” “I feared as much,” said Father Amerton, and leaning forward he covered his face with his hands’ (*Gods*, 1923, p.63).

This is demonstrative of how various positions that were considered to be a natural good to hold in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century are questioned in the text. Both sides present their norms and seem confused by the other’s practices. However, the benefit of the Utopian side is that they live in an obviously superior society. Their evidence is their lifestyle. This eventually convinces Barnstaple when he thinks of overcrowding on Earth. The general increase in population and the resulting demands on the natural resources to serve an ever-growing populace would decrease the quality of life. As the Utopians convince the lead character Barnstaple we see Utopia through the eyes of the converted which places the onus of rebuttal on the reader as well as the characters. This pattern in the narrative is an example of how in this period Wells’ writing became even more obvious in its attempts to proselytise and advocate for socialism. James remarks upon Wells’ writing after the first world war ‘His fiction becomes even more explicitly educational and he returns to

writing textbooks as well as educational polemic, even in 1923 a proposed textbook in pedagogy'.¹⁸

This is very much how the dialogue between the characters from Earth and the characters from Utopia can be viewed. The exchange highlights the deficiencies of the Earth society and in so doing educates the reader on the benefits of socialism.

Another key aspect of this dialogue is that a contextual reader of Wells was likely to hold the same political positions as Father Amerton and Mr Burleigh. Reading this text, they are forced to engage in the Socratic dialogue just as the two above characters are. This draws on certain contemporary doctrines such as Malthus' *Principle of Population*¹⁹ which whilst written many years prior remained highly influential. Malthus' text argues that in any location an abundance of resources leads to an overabundance of population condemning some to poverty. The text goes on to detail how certain population controls could be implemented to help mitigate this. The reaction to the text was one of great outrage but despite this it remained significant in discourse on population and poverty well into the early 20th century. This is not the only early eugenicist that likely influenced Wells as Galton was the first to write on positive eugenics meaning encouraging the most able bodied and intelligent to have more children in order to outweigh those less well-bred²⁰. This became Wells' position in his later writings and is reflected in more than one of his works. Wells takes great care to demonstrate the differences between the Earthlings and Utopians as a result of careful breeding. For a Utopia to exist it is a necessity that its people be more advanced. The Earthlings first and most striking difference is that they communicate through speech in comparison to the telepathy of the Utopians. Whilst simple it demonstrates the extent to which the Utopians are advanced over ordinary human beings from Earth. Earthlings are societally and genetically inferior, with the Utopians having practiced a kind of eugenics to breed out inferior types and less intelligent individuals. Mr Barnstaple when comparing the Utopians and Earthlings observes 'Mr Barnstaple contrasted the firm clear

¹⁸ Simon James. (2012). *Maps of Utopia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.168.

¹⁹ Thomas Malthus. (2011). *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. Hamburg: tradition.

²⁰ Peter Bowler. (2009). *Evolution: The History of an Idea*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, p.310.

beauty of face and limb that every Utopian displayed with the carelessly assembled features and bodily disproportions of his associates'. (*Gods*, 1923, p.87) This passage comes after we learn the Utopians have mastered the science of hereditary traits. This is another example of how Wells suggests the creation of new socialist state. There are negative traits in humanity such as ugliness and propensity to violence and by removing them society can be bettered. At the time in which this text was written eugenics did not have the negative connotations it has today. Eugenicist groups emerged in the early 1900s in Britain and various governments across the world adopted eugenicist policies from 1907 onward.²¹ America sterilised more than 100,000 mentally handicapped people between 1910 and 1930 with other countries such as Sweden, Canada Norway, Finland, Estonia Iceland and most notoriously Germany all implementing eugenics policies that involved coercion.²² Britain had a Eugenics Education society but never enacted a law prohibiting marriage or forcing sterilisation, however it was considered progressive to engage in these practices and was evidently popular in Western nations.

Wells' approach to eugenics outside of fiction was a nuanced one as he was not entirely in favour or against the use of selective breeding. In *Anticipations* (1901) where Wells makes predictions on the future of mankind he claims that there will be a shift in morality that will allow the men of the future to select the most aesthetically pleasing and powerful among them to spread their offspring. Not only this but he imagined the humane execution of the insane and the criminal would be the only recourse used by the men of the future. This ran counter to what he supported in his own period however. In his work, *The Rights of Man* (1940) Wells dismisses positive eugenics, the encouragement of those with desirable genetics to reproduce, as merely conjecture. Negative eugenics, the active sterilisation of those with negative genetic traits Wells argued was too underdeveloped a science to be put into practice. He also states that human nature, in the state in

²¹ Graham. J. Baker, (2014) "Christianity And Eugenics: The Place Of Religion In The British Education Eugenics Society And The American Eugenics Society", *The Social History Of Medicine*, 27, p.1.

²² Matt Ridley. (1999). *Genome: The Autobiography of Species in 23 Chapters*. London: Fourth Estate Limited, p.291.

which he finds it, holds the idea of sterilisation without consent repulsive.²³ This presents a crucial distinction between being pro or anti eugenics. Wells is clearly not in favour of sterilisation within his own period due to lack of technological advancement as well as the resistance many would have to it. However, he states that he can see no alternative in the future. We can contextualise this belief within Wells' *Age of Confusion*. Within Wells' period man is not advanced enough to embrace the benefit of eugenics at the perceived personal detriment. When imagining the Utopians who are thousands of years more advanced than his own civilisation Wells has no such ethical barrier. In a utopian socialist society, there are no selfish viewpoints. One thinks only of the collective and if sterilisation benefits the collective then the individual would submit to it. This demonstrates how the eugenics of the utopians is yet again Wells' reaction to the problems of the post-world war one era. Many with birth defects and what some considered to be undesirable traits were allowed to breed and multiply which in turn multiplies the problems society is burdened with. It appears that Wells believed that once society evolved past its own aggression and reached a more enlightened moral as well as scientific state eugenics would be possible and considered humane.

Barnstaple whilst being a journalist is highly critical of the press in general: 'Mr Barnstaple launched out into a long and loud tirade against the suppression and falsification of earthly newspapers' (*Gods*, 1923, p.254). Wells believed in a progressive propaganda of the press and did not regard the word with the negative connotation it holds now. During his brief membership in the Fabian Society he championed the use of it in promoting their socialist message.²⁴ As a Fabian Wells clashed with older Fabian members as he believed that a large propaganda campaign should be put in motion which was resisted and never realised by the society.²⁹ If the press served a partisan interest, reported scandal, or focussed on the negative of the world at large one can easily see how Wells would be opposed to it. A press that fails to focus on effectively exporting a progressive political

²³ H.G. Wells (1940). *The Rights Of Man*, London: Penguin Books Limited, p. 64.

²⁴ Edward R. Pease,(2011). *The History Of The Fabian Society*, New York: Barnes & Noble, p. 166. ²⁹ Robert Carswell. (2017). Rethinking "The Episode of Mr. Wells:" A Study in The Socialism, Politics, and Personalities of The Fabians and H.G. Wells. *Historia*, 16, p.72.

agenda to as many people as possible is unhelpful as it fails to question and convert those who read it. This is placed in contrast with the perfect Utopia populated entirely by genius intellects. Point by negative point Utopia excels where Earth fails and serves to demonstrate the superiority of Wells' ideal state. But Wells does not situate them as two separate endeavours rather the lesser society is merely a less evolved version of state populated by less evolved humans and has yet to reach the level of intellectual enlightenment required to achieve utopia.

Throughout the text Wells distances Earth from Utopia with conflict or Utopia's lack thereof. This is to demonstrate Utopia's superiority and to defend the idea of Utopia itself. Whilst it may seem an impossible idea to some he makes it possible by pushing it far into the future. There are a number of criteria that must be met prior to the creation of the utopian world-state, the first being the removal of private property. Wells' Utopians own a few private items and the rooms in which they work and sleep but none own land or currency of any kind. Crucially however, the Utopians do not condemn the owning of private property by their own ancestors or by the Earthlings they encounter rather they see it as a natural step in societal evolution. This serves to demonstrate the distance between Utopia and Earth as Earth is still in the Age of Confusion:

'How we got rid of it is a long story. It was not done in a few years. The exaggeration of private property was an entirely natural and necessary stage in the development of human nature. It led at last to monstrous results, but it was only through these monstrous and catastrophic results that men learnt the need and nature of limitations of private property'.
(*Gods*, 1923, p.59).

Here the Utopian Urthred does not condemn these vague atrocities committed in the excessive veneration of private property. This is useful to us as we attempt to contextualise this with Wells' viewpoint on socialism and its logical extremes. The ultimate result of socialism is the repossession of private property, but this goal has many milestones between it and the present. Whilst atrocity is obviously not something that Wells glorifies in support of socialism he is forced to defend it as part of the movement toward socialist utopia. It is a necessary evil, the process of acquiring private property and the eventual destruction of the notion itself.

Wells whilst a utopian recognised the perfection of his vision was not reflected by reality. Wells was forced to confront real world unpleasantness and find a way in which to defend his ideology. We see this in his fiction as evidenced above. However, as we have discussed Wells' utopian socialism was not just a construct of his fiction but what he believed to be the future of mankind. It was genuine events that forced him to defend socialism which he then expressed in his fiction. For example, from 1918 and throughout the early 1920s there were a number of Russian groups, some socialist, some not, in open conflict with one another over how the country should be run based on political ideology²⁵. This was to Wells microcosmic of the overall struggle of mankind to achieve a working socialist state. Wells is known to have championed the cause of socialism in Russia even publishing a book in 1921 in which he deals with the virtues and drawbacks of the relatively new communist regime. Despite the clear destitution of the populace of St Petersburg Wells desperately attempts to shift blame from the communist government and to see the benefits to their situation. Despite writing explicitly on how the problems Russia is facing, such as famine and crime, cannot be denied he goes on to write: "The peasants look well fed, and I doubt if they are very much worse off than they were in 1914. Probably they are better off. They have more land than they had, and they have got rid of their landlords".²⁶ If one is to read on Wells details how all wooden houses and utensils have been destroyed for fire wood and a simple razor is an unattainable luxury to an ordinary person. Eggs and vegetables are traded on the black market and yet Wells still attempts to paint a picture of communism that highlights certain positive aspects while down-playing the many drawbacks.

The warfare ravaging Russia with various groups fighting for and against socialism runs counter to Wells' vision of a peaceful socialist state just as the post Great War world was resistant to peaceful views of the future. The way in which Wells was forced to work his ideology around this is reflected in his fiction. The Utopians looking back on the crimes of history as tragic but necessary steps could

²⁵ Evan Mawdsley, (2011) *The Russian Civil War*, New York: Birlinn, p. 3.

²⁶ H. G. Wells (1920) *Russia in The Shadows*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, p.20.

easily be interpreted as Wells reacting to the atrocities of his own era. This feeds into the narrative of an Age of Confusion as mankind lashes out, unable to fully accomplish what it wishes to achieve as it is still in infancy. The parallels in conflict continue to be clear as the Utopians reference a Great War of their own:

‘Upon this festering, excessive mass of population disasters descended at last like wasps upon a heap of rotting fruit. It was its natural, inevitable destiny. A war that affected nearly the whole planet dislocated its flimsy financial system and most of its economic machinery beyond any possibility of repair’. (*Gods*, 1923, p.65).

This is a clear analogue to the first world war and a part of Wells’ criticism of the way his world was governed. However, it is once again not straightforwardly pessimistic. Each instance of catastrophe Wells presents the reader with is always accompanied by an assurance that this was the result of natural progression. This justifies the unrest and suffering with the promise of learning the correct way to live as a species. This is the way in which Wells contextualises the various violent upheavals, most notably the Great War, into his ideology. By treating it as a painful but necessary event, like child birth, the new world can be born from the suffering of the old one.

Another key problem Wells identifies as a barrier between his society and socialist utopia is religion. A point of contention between the Utopians and the Earthling Father Amerton is that they do not live as Christians. He sees their dress and practice of co-habitation as immoral. Upon asking if their world had a prophet of its own he is greeted with an answer that further horrifies him. A prophet’s teaching of universal service is followed but he is not worshipped as heavenly:

This prophet in Utopia they learnt had died very painfully, but not on the cross. He had been tortured in some way... It was the abominable punishment of a cruel and conquering race, and it had been inflicted upon him because his doctrine of universal service had alarmed the rich and dominant who did not serve. (*Gods*, 1923, p.68).

Wells creates an important distinction between Jesus Christ of standard Christian religion and Utopia’s own unnamed prophet. Rather than cultivating a religion he preached a doctrine of service. Urthred goes on to clarify that some incorrectly treated him as a magical son of God. Uthred points out that the dear memory of this prophet was misused by untrustworthy individuals who twisted the

words of the prophet and his teachings so they could accrue power and initiate wars. In modern Utopia, however there are no 'worshippers'. The teachings are followed but the prophet is not believed to be magical. This is an essential difference Wells creates from the real world. By relinquishing religion, the Utopians have expunged yet another source of conflict from their peaceful society. This is demonstrably Wells criticising religion in part of an argument claiming that it will inevitably lead to violent conflict. The priest Father Amerton demonstrates the lack of intelligence of the Earthlings when compared to the Utopians. His dogma prevents him from seeing the benefits to leaving structural religion behind: 'He was seeing it from another angle. "But surely," he said, "there is a remnant of believers still!... There was no remnant'. (*Gods*, 1923, p.69). Wells himself wrote on how religion had been useful to mankind but reaching the contemporary era that it was becoming outdated:

There is no creed, no way of living left in the world at all, that really meets the needs of the time... all the main religions today appear to be in a state of jostling and mutually destructive movement.²⁷

This is clearly relevant to the Utopian position on religion and feeds into the greater narrative of the Age of Confusion. Religion is portrayed as a part of the irrational period mankind must shake off if there is any hope of a utopian future. Wells' Utopia is founded on science and the liberal study and teaching of science. Father Amerton, representing religion in the text is opposed to the advances of Utopia, in particular its medical vaccinations (*Gods*, 1923, p.169). Not only this, but alternate universes and more than one Christ present problems for the uniqueness of his sacrifice and what that implies. The Utopian Christ and the way in which he is revered offers a historical perspective on the Earth Christ that challenges his divinity and therefore the way in which he is worshipped. The history of Utopia and Earth are roughly analogous in order to suggest that Earth's future would look very much like Utopia. Given what this thesis discusses on Wells and the fusion of his political and fictional work this seems highly likely. What that would therefore suggest as to the future of religion

²⁷ H. G. Wells (1939) *The Fate Of Homo Sapiens*, London: Secker and Warburg, p. 291.

is a highly contentious point and one that suggests religion is far from eternal and immutable. Wells writes the fate of Christianity as one to be relegated to history. This demonstrates how Wells not only sets religion against science and by extension the socialist future, but also that religion with any worshippers and their beliefs will become a part of history along with the Age of Confusion.

Throughout the text Wells goes to great lengths to establish the difference between the Utopian mind and the Earth mind which is perhaps more accurately referred to as the Age of Confusion mind. As discussed above the Utopians through generations have carefully removed their violent impulses and more animalistic tendencies. The characters from Earth however are not so fortunate. Seeing the peaceful idyllic lives of the Utopians drives many of the characters from Earth to desire to conquer them much to the horror of Barnstaple. Mr Catskill invokes the term Empire to the annoyance of the non-British characters but skilfully diverts their attention by rephrasing Empire to Western civilisation. What follows is a desperate attempt by Barnstaple to convince them against violent action:

‘Well, suppose you have the chances? If that makes your scheme the more hopeful, it also makes it the more horrible. Here we are lifted up out of the troubles of our time to a vision, to a reality, of civilisation such as our own world can only hope to climb to in scores of centuries! Here is a world at peace, splendid and, happy, full of wisdom and hope! If our puny strength and base cunning can contrive it, we are to shatter it all! We are proposing to wreck a world! I tell you it is not an adventure. It is a crime. It is an abomination’ (*Gods*, 1923, p.182-183).

This is the more rational position to modern reader and indeed it was likely the preference of a contemporary reader as well. However, we must remain aware of the larger point Wells is making with the above passage. Whilst the conquering of Utopia in the name of empire seems an absurd one it is really no different to the conquering of any other civilisation by the British Empire. The only difference here is that Utopia will not be conquered. Wells had already written in criticism of Imperialism at the beginning of the first world war and it was his belief that the war could halt the progress of the Kaiser’s empire in Europe (Wells, 1915, p.10). This is why he was in favour of armed

intervention. Even if war cost many lives it would, if successful, prevent the spread of an empire. It is also clear the connection Wells makes between Empire and savagery. The British Empire at the turn of the century was the height of civilisation but here Wells reverses this belief by asserting the greedy desire to conquer is in fact a product of an undeveloped people. The Age of Confusion mind is an aggressive one and rather than share and learn the Earth characters reveal they would rather take control of a planet they see as weak. It is by this contrast that Wells demonstrates not only the superiority of Utopian people but the inferiority of Earth people. Barnstaple's position here is labelled by the others as a conscientious objector a label which Barnstaple rejects. He would be more accurately described as a pacifist which reflects Wells' own political beliefs. By the time Wells had written this text he had publicly referred to himself as a pacifist which likely influenced his writing of Barnstaple's opinion on the proposed conflict. In his work on the Great War Wells writes:

I avow myself an extreme Pacifist. I am against the man who first takes up the weapon. I carry my pacifism far beyond the position of that ambiguous little group of British and foreign sentimentalists who pretend so amusingly to be socialists in the Labour Leader, whose conception of peace would be no more than a breathing time for a fresh outrage on civilisation.²⁸

It is important to state that Wells was not a pacifist in the modern or even traditional sense of the word given his views going into the first world war but both the text this chapter focusses on and the text from which the passage above is drawn were written within a few years of each other. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that this pacifist belief was represented in *Gods*. Whilst written in the same era by the same man there is nuance to his writings and beliefs that go beyond pro or anti-war.

The superiority of the Utopians is ultimately made apparent not through verbal discourse but through physical confrontation. Barnstaple is unsuccessful in convincing his companions against

²⁸ H.G. Wells (1917). *War and the Future: Italy, France and Britain at War*, London: Cassell, p.11.

their desire for war and instead is forced through desperation to warn the Utopians. His warning is not entirely successful but neither is the attack:

A pistol cracked and then another went off three times. 'Oh God!' cried Mr Barnstaple. 'Oh God!' as he saw Serpentine throw up his arms and fall backward, and then Cedar had grasped and lifted up Mush and hurled him at Mr. Catskill and Penk, bowling them both over into one indistinguishable heap. With a wild cry M. Dupont closed in on Cedar but not quickly enough. His club shot into the air as Cedar parried his blow, and then the Utopian stooped, caught him by a leg, overthrew him, lifted him and whirled him round as one might whirl a rabbit. (*Gods*, 1923, p.196).

This brief exchange reveals two points. The first is that the Utopians are not without the will to defend themselves. The characters who planned the attack believed that living in Utopia would weaken its inhabitants. This is clearly not the case. The second point revealed by this encounter is how utterly outclassed ordinary humans are by Utopians. Whilst they fell one with firearms Cedar is able to lift them and sling them into one another. This presents a scene of clear supremacy in favour of Utopia. Utopia's people are not easily frightened or overpowered and they are not predisposed to violence as Age of Confusion humans are. The result of the small war between Earth and Utopia demonstrates that not only are the more primitive humans disposed toward violence but they are far less physically developed.

Urthred the Utopian summarises the defects of the Earthlings and their period:

Yours are Age of Confusion minds, trained to conflict, trained to insecurity and secret self-seeking. In that fashion Nature and your state have taught you to live and so you must needs live until you die. Such lessons are to be unlearnt only in ten thousand generations, by the slow education of three thousand years. (*Gods*, 1923, p.101).

This seems to be a matter of indoctrination more than inherent hereditary barbarity. Wells finds the minds of his own time simply too primitive as a result of their surroundings. Despite certain characters taking umbrage with the practices and norms of the society such as their irreligiosity and their sexual freedom all criticisms are turned away by the fact that the Utopian society is so much more advanced and successful by any standard. Earth humanity is similar to the ancient ancestors of the Utopian society. The above quote demonstrates the immense distance between the two

peoples. It is only by the slow and painstaking process of attempts at betterment over thousands of years that socialist utopia can be within the grasp of Earth humanity. This explains and justifies the upheaval of his period as the violence of a species too basic to yet better itself. This neatly ties up the conflict with the Earth characters and restates the superiority of Utopia. One of the key differences between Utopia and Earth is the way in which the young are educated. The dialogue regarding this is delivered quite simply: 'Our education is our government'. (*Gods*, 1923, p.74). The passage describes Utopia's lack of parliament, lack of police, lack of competition, trade and any other system of control or exchange that would be thought of as natural to both a contemporary and modern reader. This is because the need for these systems has been trained out of Utopia's children at a young age. This is evidenced in Barnstaple's meeting with a Utopian youth who far outstrips him in terms of knowledge and demonstrates the way in which Utopia educates its young:

So far as Mr. Barnstaple could gather the more serious part of his intellectual training was in mathematical work interrelated to physical and chemical science, but all that was beyond an Earthling's range of ideas. Most of this work seemed to be done in cooperation with other boys, and to be what we should call research on earth... The boy was just learning about the growth of the Utopian social system out of the Ages of Confusion. His imagination was alive with the tragic struggles upon which the present order of Utopia was founded. (*Gods*, 1923, p.244).

This two-pronged form of education reflects the proclivities of Wells and his personal beliefs in education. The boy and his classmates engage in their own research and whilst this is far in advance of what any ordinary child could engage in Wells' own recommendations for education were based in changing the way in which children were taught and instead giving them a foundation upon which to learn. This foundation would be an understanding of the world from which learning could take place:

What are we telling young people directly about the world in which they are to live? What is the world picture we are presenting to their minds? What is the framework about conceptions and reality and about obligation into which the rest of their mental existences

will have to be fitted? I am proposing in fact a review of the informative side of education, wholly and solely-informative in relation to the needs of modern life.²⁹

This illuminates the Utopian stance on education. Despite seeming to be intensely alien and a product of the superhuman capacity of the Utopian people it is not entirely so. As we see above Wells wanted the basis of education to be on making the pupils familiar with their world first and having them study in earnest second. This is what we see in an exaggerated form in the education of the youth Crystal. He and his colleagues conduct research beyond the minds of Earth scientists, a clearly fictional feat. However, this could have basis in reality if Wells' educational beliefs were put into practice. The socialist utopia requires a particular kind of mind. The minds produced by Earth and its Age of Confusion are too disordered and prone to conflict and misery. Barnstaple upon being told he will be sent back to Earth is horrified and attempts to argue against the decision. He states his desire to stay and contribute to Utopia. He is told he does not belong because of what he is rather than any action he might have taken: 'You are an Earthling born and made. What else can you be?' ... a world of sweet gains and uncompanionable beauty, a world of enterprises in which a muddy-witted, weakwilled Earthling might neither help nor share. (*Gods*, 1923, p.240). That the Utopian Lychnis refers to him as made is revealing. Whilst as an individual he is predisposed to favour Utopia over Earth and wish to stay he remains a product of the Age of Confusion. This has left its indelible mark upon him despite any desire to extricate himself. As we learn from Barnstaple's exchanges with the youth Crystal the Age of Confusion produces such horror that it prevents understanding unless you have lived through it. (*Gods*, 1923, p.246). Barnstaple is the product of his own feeble education just as the Utopians are the product of their superior one. This issue of societal imprint is one way in which Wells defends socialist utopia. The minds of his own time are simply too badly scarred and beaten by the educational and social processes that are a part of ordinary Victorian to early 20th century life. Thus the Age of Confusion must be transcended if one is to reach socialist utopia.

²⁹ H.G. Wells (2016). *World Brain*. Read Books Ltd., p.50.

The importance placed on education is not only highlighted in the Utopians and their system that creates perfect peaceful polymaths but the failures of Earth education are referred to also. In a brief exchange between Barnstaple and Catskill, the former laments the way in which Catskill was educated:

‘The trouble is you have been so damnably educated. What is the trouble with you? You are be-Kiplinged. Empire and Anglo-Saxon and boy-scout and sleuth are the stuff of your mind. If I had gone to Eton I might have been the same as you are, I suppose.’ ‘Harrow’ corrected Mr. Catskill. ‘A perfectly beastly public school. Suburban place where the boys wear chignons and straw haloes... Given decent ideas you might have been very different from what you are. If I had been your schoolmaster’. (*Gods*, 1923, p.203).

This is the reverse of the process by which Utopia educates its young. Catskill has been educated in the benefits of empire and taught that colonialism is a virtue. This explains his desire to conquer the Utopian people. This also affirms the importance of education to the mythos of the Age of Confusion. The people who live within it are at a crossroads of civilisation. The capacity to rise above barbarity exists but is not being tapped into. The tragedy that Barnstaple picks up on is the wasted potential that will never be put to positive use and instead perpetuates savagery in the form of violence and imperialism. The use of the term ‘be-Kiplinged’ is telling and requires some explanation. Kipling was a great defender of the British Empire and saw it as a vast philanthropic entity, *The White Man’s Burden*³⁰ preceding *Gods* by some time. Catskill is clearly influenced by Kipling in the way he is written, his chauvinism for empire and Western civilisation is evident setting him as a typical Earthling from the Age of Confusion and ultimately inimical to the Utopian way of life.

To conclude this chapter, it is clear that Wells indeed uses this text as a means of criticising his own period and demonstrates the ways in which society can outgrow the Age of Confusion. This is done firstly by referring to actual historical events which at the time would have been considered contemporary affairs. This makes the link between societies obvious. If the fictional Earth society is

³⁰ Gretchen Murphy. (2010). *Shadowing The White Man’s Burden*. New York: New York University Press.p.10.

more or less identical to the real one its potential to become the Utopian society makes more sense. This serves Wells political interest in promoting the socialist state as viable. This results in Wells writing on the necessary catastrophes resulting from the destruction of private property. Not only does this reference the emerging Soviet Union but excuse the violence that precipitates it as part of the 'Age of Confusion' and therefore part of the emergence of humanity from savagery. This is a part of the overall theme of conflict Wells uses when dealing with the interactions between Earth and Utopia. By making the Earth characters more predisposed to violence he not only highlights their barbarity but also excuses the violence of his time. Whilst unpleasant it is a natural reaction to existence within a primitive society. Wells also shows how departure from religion is a necessary part of this also as religion creates conflict as well as those who seek to abuse it. He also sets belief in the magical nature of religion against science which is one of the key tenets of Utopia. The great level of advancement Wells depicts in Utopia is not so far removed from contemporary mankind that it represents a problem for Wells. The Utopians have carefully cultivated their society through eugenics and careful education to escape the aggression and possessive nature of the Age of Confusion brain. This is demonstrated more through the Earth characters and their aggression as a result of the way they have been raised. This sets them as a stark contrast to the Utopians. They are depicted as the culmination of thousands of years of cautious advancement which could be attained by Earth's humans once they have left the Age of Confusion. It is this that Wells' argument hinges upon. To reach the socialist utopia one must explain the lack of desire for socialism in his own time. This is explained by taking modern humanity as still infantile in its development. The Age of Confusion binds together the first world war, the Russian famines, and all other evils of the time into one phrase that explains and compartmentalises it as a regrettable but necessary part of human history.

Chapter Two: The Dream

This chapter will focus on *The Dream* (1924) which describes a Wellsian Utopia but in an unconventional sense. The narrative is a step removed, being told from the perspective of a character living in a utopian future who dreams an entire life of a man living in the late eighteenth-hundreds to the early nineteenth-hundreds. This is useful to this thesis in that it grants insights into life in the fin-de-siècle era just as much as it does the utopia of the future demonstrating the contrast between the two. This is in part engagement with other utopian texts such as More's *Utopia* (1516), as Wells' utopias are not only in dialogue with other literary utopias such as Plato's and More's, but also with one another. It is a trope of the utopian genre to have the utopian and the pre-utopian compared in order to satirise or demonstrate a kind of criticism. The common theme is of the Age of Confusion as each of Wells' utopias are in consensus on how to contextualise the violent past. The differences between them and how they interact largely come from perspective. *Men Like Gods* (1923) details an adventure into a Utopia and describes it through the eyes of a foreigner. *The Dream* (hereafter referred to as *Dream*) reverses that perspective with the utopian becoming the foreigner in the Age of Confusion. This in turn grants a new perspective on both and is arguably Wells pushing his literary boundaries allowing him to write from an alternate viewpoint. A crucial component of the literary utopia is how it criticises the period in which it was written, for example Morris' *News From Nowhere* engages with other viewpoints on socialism and what it would look like.

Holzman writes:

News From Nowhere (1890) contains criticisms of certain tendencies in the emerging English revolutionary movement of the 1890s, especially those of the Anarchists. This layer of meaning, which would have been most important to the first audience of the tale- the readers of the Socialist League's *Commonweal*- was pointed to in the opening phrases of *News From Nowhere*.³¹

There is more than one example of this. More's *Utopia* satirised certain elements of society and as Manuel writes criticise certain established norms:

³¹ Michael Holzman. (1984). Anarchism and Utopia: William Morris's *News from Nowhere*. *ELH*, 51(3), p.589.

In the Utopia, he was animated by a desire to reform institutions... he ridiculed diplomatic pomp by decking out an ambassador in the gold that utopians use for chamber pots and he derided the English judicial system with savage attacks delivered through the mouth of the wild prophet Hythloday.³²

This demonstrates a clear trend for utopian fiction to criticise the period in which it is written. It is by nature superior to the circumstances in which the authors live and therefore can be used as means of escaping issues and problems their own eras present. Wells comments on his own period in an unusual way here, through the perspective of someone who has lived in utopia first and Victorian society second. This allows for a unique critique. From the lofty position of Utopia one can demonstrate social and societal problems whilst simultaneously offering a solution. Much of the text involves the relaying of information about the past society which the utopians all find greatly perplexing. This presents a dialogue with the problems of the past, offering solutions whilst condemning the worst aspects. These problems include class divides in which conflict is engendered between those who control the land and wealth and those who do not. They also include education as Wells did not believe the education of his era was preparing children in the correct way, as this chapter will demonstrate. Wells also takes issue with environmental practices and prescribes his own improved methods for caring for the natural world. He grapples with gender equality and sexual freedoms, two things long distant from his own period but absolutely necessary for a utopia without any kind of conflict. By engaging on so many different fronts Wells attempts to reconcile certain perceived incompatibilities between his own era and the future utopia. This chapter will demonstrate how Wells conducts this dialogue and demonstrate how he relays his utopia's strengths against the weaknesses of his own era.

The text opens with Sarnac and his lover Sunray taking a holiday to refresh their minds before beginning new directions of study with their work. Whilst exploring a tunnel in which many people were killed by poisonous gasses Sarnac injures his hand on some glass. This injury is intimated to be

³² Frank Manuel. and Fritzie Manuel. (2009). *Utopian Thought in the Western World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p.142.

what causes his dream of a life already lived. This remains vague, perhaps suggesting a transferal of memory between a relic of tragedy and the Age of Confusion. This seems relatively arcane for an H.G. Wells text, however it is clearly a narrative artifice as it is not mentioned again. Once Sarnac begins to describe his dream his companion Sunray is aghast at the quality of life he describes.

Sarnac agrees despite the relative health of the era:

You see in the thirty or forty years before my birth there had been a comparative prosperity and productivity in human affairs ... As a result of this conspiracy of favourable conditions there was a perceptible rise in the standards of life of the common people, but for the most part it was discounted by a huge rise in population.³³

Sarnac's companions go on to criticise the leaders of the time for not preventing the rising population. This condemnation sets the general tone of the work, with Sarnac relaying some aspect of antiquated life for his companions to question why it was not done differently and better. Much of this critique is aimed at social life and the ways in which with social engineering it could be improved. By using the perspective of individuals in 4000 A.D. Wells suggests alterations to his own social norms. He also makes use of historical factors that legitimise the work. Jefferies writing on population changes illuminates this in the following:

After 1850 adult mortality rates began to fall more dramatically (as would be expected in stage two of the demographic transition model). The possible reasons for the fall in death rates in the 19th century are disputed but may include improved nutrition, rising standards of living, such as improved sanitation, and the introduction of the smallpox vaccine. Infant mortality in England remained high until 1900 but fell during the first half of the 20th century, probably due to improved public health.³⁴

This passage confirms something that will become clear at several points in this dissertation: that Wells makes use of genuine contemporary events to anchor his fiction. By doing this it lends a realism to the more unrealistic elements of his texts. Whilst there were many contemporary events that would suggest a utopia in the near future as unlikely, Wells uses these events to his advantage.

³³ H.G. Wells (1924). *The Dream*, London: The London Book Co.Ltd, p. 14.

³⁴ Julie Jefferies. (2005). *Focus On People and Migration*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, p.5.

Interestingly he does not see the rise in population as a good thing, despite this meaning that there was a rise in public health. Rather he felt this is what led to pestilence and overpopulation as discussed in the previous chapter. Much of what Wells witnesses of his own period he interprets as negative. This is of course difficult for a progressive who believes in a literal progression of society towards a socialist utopia. By incorporating historical events into his fiction he brings a level of realism to the text.

One of the key norms questioned within the text is that of class. The life of Harry Mortimer Smith is initially working class and city dwelling, allowing Wells to criticise the living standards and general expectations of urban Victorian lives. Cramped and dirty conditions were a reality of life but through the eyes of the Utopian observers it is the height of savagery. Through this Wells is able to criticise the relative health and happiness of his era and argue that what people expect as standard is not nearly enough. Wells does not emphasise poor treatment at the hands of those better off than them, rather that all people of the period are suffering from the effects of a bad state. The criticism is directed not at the different classes but rather the system itself:

The fact remains that England grudged its own children the shabbiest education, and so for the matter of fact did every other country. They saw things differently in those days. They were still in the competitive cave... We children learned very little and we learned it very badly. (*Dream*, 1924, p.19).

Despite the Elementary Education Act of 1870 which made education free and compulsory for all children between the ages of five and twelve³⁵ education for the vast majority of children remained relatively rudimentary. The problem identified here is systemic. The people of the world are simply too primitive to be moral and afford the children of others a good education. This is roundly condemned by Sarnac's companions and reads as a means of questioning Wells' own circumstances. A contextual reader of Wells' work would be challenged by this passage to reconsider the position

³⁵ Derek Gillard. (2017). *Elementary Education Act 1870* - full text online. Educationengland.org.uk. <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/acts/1870-elementary-education-act.html>.

that poor education is merely the lot of the working class. James articulates this well in *Maps of Utopia* (2012):

Wells' imaginings of both fantastic and utopian futures engage with the forces that shape identity and civilisation in the present: education, class, money, gender, literacy... Wells attempts to show that the identities created by such forces are not irreversible but contingent.³⁶

By using criticism from a future society with a completely different, and intentionally superior set of morals, Wells demonstrates not only flaws but solutions. Wells' critique is one of both class and government. Both are, Wells claims, whilst natural not final and certainly not a desirable state for mankind to exist under. The utopia of the future is evidence for that. In the short passage on Harry M. Smith's education we see almost every article listed above met. The horror that children might be begrudged an education and have little given to them to meet their intellectual needs is clear from Sarnac's companions. Their shock at the reticence toward helping children combined with their advanced society forces a reader to question their own notions about the education of children and the part the state should play. This utopia looks at late eighteen-hundreds society as savage. This judgement is part of Wells tactics in making his readers question the inadequacies of their own period. This also distances selfishness from the natural state of humanity, allowing Wells to show that society's self-interest comes because of the Age of Confusion rather than mankind itself.

This text much like *Men Like Gods* (1923) makes references to real world events. Having been written and published within a year of one another this explains their similarity. Wells' political and social beliefs took no great turn at this stage. He had no longer been associated with the Fabians for many years. The way in which the Age of Confusion is described and what it describes seems to be almost identical. This would suggest Wells attributes a significance to it across fictions for a reason. That reason is likely because it describes in his mind his own era. Both texts are written in the wake of the first world war and both detail its horror and disruptive after-effects. 'That' said Radiant, 'was

³⁶ Simon James, *Maps Of Utopia*, (Oxford (GB): Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 77.

some time before the Great War then, and the Social Collapse' (*Dream*, 1924, p.12). Here we see not only a reference to world war one but also an unspecific referral to a collapse of some kind. This is likely reference to the vast upheaval and trauma that was spread across vast swathes of Europe and the Middle East. In Britain, the value of the pound fell by over sixty percent leading to mass inflation.³⁷ Hobsbawm gives this period the name 'The Age of Catastrophe' in obvious similarity to Wells Age of Confusion. He writes on this period:

The First World War devastated only parts of the old world, mainly those in Europe. World revolution, the most dramatic breakdown of nineteenth century bourgeois civilisation, spread more widely: from Mexico to China and, in the form of movements for colonial liberation, from the Maghreb to Indonesia.³⁸

It is clear that the effects of the war reverberated throughout the empire destabilising previous power structures and causing immense social pressure. This was a huge problem regardless of the social strain as this was the first war in many years where the sovereign territory of Britain was considered to be under threat. The term social collapse collects these various issues at the time. This helps contextualise not only the narrative of Harry M. Smith's life but also legitimises the position of Sarnac and his companions as observers looking back on history. Their position in the future utopia is solidified by having a factual history to refer to.

As we have already discussed the contrast of life between utopia and contemporary society is crucial to utopian texts. Wells' utopian texts sometimes engage in satire to do this. It is crucial however that we distinguish this as a feature of his later writing. This shows a development in Wells utopian vision as well as engagement with other already existing utopias. When one considers the Samurai of Wells' *A Modern Utopia*³⁹(1905) the stark and self-denying lives described leaves little room for humour. However, in *Dream* (1924) written almost twenty years later Wells uses the distance

³⁷ Robert Twigger, "Inflation: The Value Of The Pound 1750-1998", www.Parliament.Uk/Commons, 2017 <https://web.archive.org/web/20060219130455/http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp99/rp99020.pdf>.

³⁸ Eric Hobsbawm. (2006). *Age of Extremes*. London: Royal National Institute of the Blind, p.86.

³⁹ H.G. Wells, (1905) *A Modern Utopia*, London: Chapman and Hall.

between his own society and his advanced hypothetical society to provide humour: 'All Cherry Gardens was heated by open coal fires- and we went into a dark underground kitchen where my mother poor dear! Cooked according to her lights.' 'You were troglodytes!' said Willow' (*Dream*, 1924). This hyperbolic assertion does provide a humorous aside from the description of the deprived setting but it also helps demonstrate the sheer advancement of Sarnac's society. This would force a contemporary reader to question their own preconceived notions toward savagery and civility. Wells asserts that his own period is still very much uncivilised despite their pretensions. The vast distance in terms of time between his own society and the future utopia allows Wells to validate the incredible differences. The differences in quality of life are not so unbelievable when one introduces nearly two thousand years distance.

One could argue that this is not an argument consistent with Wells' greater body of work. When one considers the plot of *The Sleeper Awakes*⁴⁰ the far future is not a refuge from class struggle and instead shows a greater disparity between rich and poor. Wells' most famous work *The Time Machine*⁴¹ depicts a class struggle of its own. This text has often been read as a criticism or exaggeration of class disparities with the beautiful and simple Eloi being the upper classes and the predatory Morlocks representing the working classes. This is not a new position with a review of the novel, written shortly after its release by a critic named Hutton in the *Spectator*, in serialised format picks up on this theme of class and writes this of the Morlocks: 'A race which has learned to serve, and to serve efficiently, and had lost its physical equality with its masters by the conditions of its servitude.'⁴²

This contradicts our previous position. If we are to argue that Wells uses his fiction in order to promote a socialist agenda, speaking prophetically through his writing this dystopian theme in his earlier work would initially seem to contradict that. However, both these problematic texts are

⁴⁰ H.G. Wells, (2017). *The Sleeper Awakes*. Newburyport: Open Road Media Sci-Fi & Fantasy.

⁴¹ H.G. Wells. (2005). *The Time Machine*. New York: Random House.

⁴² Patrick Parrinder. (1972). *H.G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, p.34.

Wells' earlier work long before the outbreak of the first world war and long before Wells settled into the socialist beliefs he would hold for the rest of his life. As we have already discussed during this thesis, Wells opinions and theories changed as time passed like any persons political or philosophical views. That is why one must always refer to the context in which each text was written and Wells' position at the time. The texts this thesis interrogates are written after the first world war amidst the chaos that ensued. Not only this but when one considers Wells' non-fiction works written at the same time they espouse and describe very similar socialist utopias. *The Salvaging of Civilisation* (1921) and *The Way the World is Going* (1928) both exist as contemporary texts to *Dream* and the other texts of this thesis. Feir supports this is the following:

Much of what Wells created was far from imaginary and he repeated his opinions many times over in a public forum. He collected newspaper articles and produced newly edited books with a special introductory preface. He would later revise or rewrite these books as his opinion changed.⁴³

The above quote helps demonstrate why this thesis focusses on Wells' post-war texts. It identifies a period in which we can consistently study his writings and beliefs. Therefore, to argue texts Wells wrote at the beginning of his career as being an accurate characterisation of his beliefs post-war is deeply reductive.

One of the central themes of the text is education which is of course central to Wells' idea of socialist utopia. Smith is much like the protagonist Barnstaple of *Gods* (1923) both characters being intelligent writers who work for small liberal, progressive publications. Unlike Mr Kipps and Mr Lewisham, two of Wells' most famous protagonists, the aforementioned characters are part of a science fiction plot. Another key difference is both Barnstaple and Smith have contact, one way or another, with a socialist utopia. They both serve as the axis upon which Victorian society is judged in comparison to Wells speculative world-state. They are also, when of comparable age, both educated

⁴³ Gordon Feir. (2005). *H. G. Wells at the end of his tether*. New York: iUniverse, p.90.

liberals. As already covered above, Harry M. Smith's education was poor, which trapped him in a life of work that did not satisfy him intellectually. Much to the surprise of the utopians

Harry's own family and immediate neighbours almost all try to convince him against becoming educated. Wilful ignorance in exchange for business is one of the greater crimes of the Age of Confusion:

'If I can't get an education-' I said, and left the desperate sentence unfinished. I am afraid I was near weeping. To learn nothing beyond my present ignorance seemed to me then like a sentence of imprisonment for life. It wasn't I who suffered that alone. Thousands of poor youngsters of fourteen or fifteen in those days knew enough to see clearly that the doors of practical illiteracy were closing in upon them, and yet did not know enough to find a way of escape from this mental extinction. (*Dream*, 1924)

This point by Wells is a crucial one as it demonstrates not only the personal struggle of Harry M. Smith to become as educated as he is intelligent but also the tragedy of the period. Between the year 1850 and 1900 literacy rates vastly improved as the population went from about seventy percent literate to over ninety percent.⁴⁴ However this percentage is misleading. Whilst reading ability was high the percentage of people who could read easily and write at all was lower. Lemire explains this point in the following:

We normally think of literacy as demonstrating proficiency in both reading and writing, but in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this was often not the case. Some people only mastered reading or writing, while the two were often taught separately and partial literacy was fairly common. It's possible that about twice as many people could read as write in early Victorian England, a very real problem for historians trying to set a benchmark for literacy.⁴⁵

This illuminates the real ignorance that exists on this topic and that it is unlikely that many people were literate by modern standards. This leaves us in the position of having to assume certain points based on the information at hand. We can assume that poorer families who experienced low quality of education would likely be poor at writing thus limiting their ability for intellectual output. Their level of reading was likely to be poor also. This is where we find Harry M. Smith. Wells highlights the

⁴⁴ David Mitch. Education and Skill of the British Labour Force, in Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol. I: Industrialisation, 1700-1860*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.344

⁴⁵ Devon Lemire. (2012). A Historiographical Survey of Literacy in Britain between 1780 and 1830. *Constellations* University of Alberta, 4(1), p.249.

tragedy here of thousands of people desperate for an education but forced by their circumstance and indeed sometimes their families to lay aside such ambitions. It is worth noting this is Wells' own experience as he began his professional career as a draper, only to find he despised it. After some time of desperately petitioning his family to allow him to leave he took up a position as student and tutor at the nearby college where he found his intellectual stimulation⁴⁶. Education is key to the socialist utopia envisaged by Wells. Indeed, it is in fact necessary to his prediction. As Wager notes, Wells wrote that an open conspiracy of intellectuals would precipitate the fall of the old-world order. They would spread throughout bureaucracy and government and this would naturally lead to mankind shedding the limitations of contemporary society⁴⁷. This demonstrates the importance of the desire for education and education itself. Not only is it vital to the well-being of the individual, it is the very way utopia comes into existence. Without education and in turn the educated being allowed to help society slough off the unhealthy products of all non-socialist regimes the future utopia of Sarnac and his companions will never be reality. This is how Wells demonstrates the withholding of education as a true social evil.

We can see evidence for this in his non-fiction in parallel to Wells' fiction. For example, briefly referred to above was *The Open Conspiracy: What are we to do with our lives?* (1928) Is a non-fiction work that details how Wells believes the educated and scientifically minded men will rise throughout the planet's infrastructures and with complete honesty guide the world's population into a socialist world-state. Wells writes about various ways this will be done but one of the primary ones is the education of the young. He writes:

Organized teaching has always aimed, and will always tend to guide, train, and direct, the mind... During the early phases of its struggle, therefore, the Open Conspiracy will be obliged to adopt a certain sectarianism of domestic and social life in the interest of its children, to experiment in novel educational methods and educational atmospheres, and it may in many cases have to consider the grouping of its families and the establishment of its own schools.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Michael Draper, (1987). *H.G. Wells*, London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd, p. 2

⁴⁷ Patrick Parrinder, Christopher Rolfe. (1990). *H. G. Wells Under Revision*, Cranbury: Associated University press, p. 41.

⁴⁸ H.G. Wells. (2006). *The Open Conspiracy*. San Diego, Book Tree, p.138.

This demonstrates clearly that Wells vision of the future requires education to survive. It gives greater meaning to the desperation Smith feels at the chance of not being able to be educated as he will be left behind as the world moves on. To deny education to a child is a cardinal sin in the socialist mindset of Wells.

The modern result of education is employment in a role one would excel. This is similar to the utopia Wells envisions, where a child's education helps the educators understand how best the child would serve and in what capacity. This was not the case in Wells' era and this is reflected in the life of Harry M. Smith:

In those days, you must understand, no attempt was made to gauge the natural capacity of a child. Human beings were expected to be grateful of any opportunity of 'getting a living.' Parents bundled their children into any employment that came handy, and... which commonly cramped or crippled them. (*Dream*, 1924, p.37)

This reveals not only the attitude toward employment of the Victorian working class but also that of the utopians. It reveals two tropes of Utopian writing. The first is that in Utopia there is no real focus on preparing for the future in order to shore up one's resources. Whilst certain measures are taken such as education for the young it is not done for employment but for what suits the individual. In Utopia the future is of no great concern as the apex of human achievement has been reached. The second revelation here is the Utopian attitude to work and how it differs from necessary work that allows for survival and prosperity. The need to have work that suits the individual would seem an exceedingly important part of building a utopia. As Firchow remarks when writing on the utopia as an ideal 'In a world where leisure is compulsory, utopian existence seems horrifying'⁴⁹. This is no doubt due to the removal of purpose and meaning from life, demonstrating the importance of work in a utopia. This is something with which every utopia has been forced to grapple, and the problem of unpleasant work that nevertheless needs to be done is one that has been written on by Plato and More long before Wells attempted to address it. Morris in *News from Nowhere* (1890) makes

⁴⁹ Peter Edgerly Firchow, (2011) *Modern Utopian Fictions From H.G. Wells To Iris Murdoch*, Washington: Catholic University of America Press, p. 7.

excellent satire of the point when describing the dustman dressed all in white and gold like a king.⁵⁰

Whilst this certainly makes light of the point in general the problem remains. In order to create a utopia one must address the issue of work. Wells addresses this by suggesting it is merely finding the right person for the right work. The terms misfit and cramped certainly suggesting that wrong work is like an ill-fitting piece of clothing. It can be done but is uncomfortable and does not suit the wearer. By also referring to work that cripples the worker Wells makes a humanitarian point as to the dangerous work performed by some in his time. The future utopia is clearly thought to have transcended the need for anything dangerous or potentially damaging. This attitude can perhaps be explained by Wells' position and knowledge of the working class. His experience and dealings with working class people were almost entirely confined to his earlier life where he would encounter shopkeepers and drapers. Raknem explains this in the following:

In his novels he does not display any particular insight into the life of other classes than his own. He had probably no intimate knowledge of the working classes... He knew well the small shopkeepers and their ups and downs in Bromley High Street... His circle of acquaintances soon widened. He mixed with editors, became acquainted with the radical section of intelligentsia, was drawn into the world of politicians.⁵¹

Perhaps this explains Wells' attitude toward work in his utopia. He escaped life working as a draper and went into intellectual work through his writing and teaching. This allowed him to move away from the physical labour he had been expected to perform. When laid out in this manner it reflects the life of Smith, our protagonist, almost exactly. Smith must desperately plead with his family for an education just as Wells himself had to and he eventually succeeds in becoming a writer and making himself part of the middle class. This would seem to suggest Raknem is correct. However, this does not in turn mean that Wells fails to understand hard or messy work. Such work is referred to in the text. Rather it seems much like Wells' and Smith's society must drag itself intellectually from the Age of Confusion into Utopia and in so doing free itself from dull labour and chores. When Utopia is

⁵⁰ William Morris, (1987) *News From Nowhere*, London: Penguin Books.

⁵¹ Ingvald Raknem. (1962). *H.G. Wells and His Critics: Wells' Limited Conception of Man*. Norway: George Allen and Unwin, p.177.

described its technological advances do not allow for dirty cellars or disease or parasitic insects.

Wells identifies work in two ways. The first is the unpleasant necessary kind an uncivilised society must engage in. The second is intellectual and fulfilling. The former is something utopia sheds through certain individuals in the Age of Confusion engaging in the latter.

Work that is appropriate is not the only gripe the utopians have with the past but also with property.

This is not to say Wells disapproves of private property entirely but to a degree he does take issue with it. We see in his utopias that individuals may own personal items and clothing and will have places to stay that are entirely theirs but that is the extent. Owning land is not possible. We see this not only in *Dream* (1924) but in *Men Like Gods* (1923) and *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933).

Whilst each Age of Confusion is described slightly differently and from different perspectives, this remains a common theme. During Wells's membership of the Fabian society he wrote an essay advocating for the abolishment of private property arguing that it would be a change of immense good:

The establishment of a new and better order of society by the abolition of private property in land, in natural productions, and in their exploitation- a change as profound as the abolition of private property of slaves would have been in ancient Rome.⁵²

Clearly Wells regarded private property as a tremendous evil. Whilst this was written in 1907 his views on private property remain consistent throughout his career so this is without doubt a fair characterisation of his beliefs in his own words. When we consider the context for this viewpoint we must remember it was only 30 years before this that some four thousand individuals owned over half of all land in England.⁵³ During the early 20th century taxes were raised on these individuals and their wealth was depleted by the industrial revolution but their power remained for some time.

Sarnac criticises private landlords based on his experience in the following:

⁵² H. G. Wells, (2016). *This Misery Of Boots*. By H.G. Wells. Reprinted With Alterations From The Independent Review, December 1905, London: Read books Ltd, p. 13.

⁵³ Adrian Cruttendon, *The Victorians*, (London: Evans Brothers Ltd, 2006), p. 36.

It was the dearest privilege of the British landlord to restrict the free movements of the ordinary people and Lord Bramble guarded his wilderness with devotion. Great areas of good land were in a similar state of picturesquely secluded dilapidation. (*Dream*, 1924, p.38)

This is a criticism of private property from two directions. The first is that of simple selfishness on the part of land owners. To own that which another does not is clearly a pleasure to them and by restricting movement across their land they hold their power over the common man's head. The second criticism is that the land sits unused and wasted. The utopia of the future is an industrious one as we have discussed above with work being a key element. By leaving potential resources untapped one only harms the greater good. Even if this land was not to be used for industrial or agricultural purposes, Wells emphasises the sick nature of the woodland. Were caretakers allowed to tend to it and anyone allowed to enjoy it could become a garden. This exists as part of a popular literary resistance to oligarchic control of land and industrialisation. Lawrence was famously against industrialisation as Heywood writes: 'Lawrence had a great deal to say about the process of industrialisation and the social consequences which grew out of the transformation of England from an agrarian to a "mechanical, disintegrated, amorphous" industrial society'.⁵⁴ Whilst Wells' point is not one specifically on industry we must respect that these positions form the context of one another.

Wells' argument is ultimately with private property itself. As long as the land remains in the hands of one man the waste of the area continues. Here Wells cleverly demonstrates a case for the removal of private property. It is difficult to argue how one would take that which belongs to someone else and distribute it without appearing to be tyrannical. By demonstrating both greed and waste here, Wells strengthens the moral case for the abolition of private property.

It is also important to consider this point on land in comparison with earlier writings on both utopia and the virtues of nature. It was at this time that White's *The Natural History of Selbourne*⁵⁵ was

⁵⁴ Christopher Heywood. (1988). *D. H. Lawrence: New Studies*. London: The Macmillan Press, p.2.

⁵⁵ Gilbert White. and Ronald Davidson-Houston. (1984). *The illustrated natural history of Selbourne*. London: Macmillan in collaboration with the Gilbert White Museum.

highly popular as a seminal text of nature writing, exemplary in observation of flora and fauna, its appreciation of local environments.⁵⁶ A desire to enjoy and understand nature was clearly prevalent. This also reflects certain agrarian utopias such as Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1890). In his description of his Utopia's countryside the care for nature is clear: 'The banks of the forest that we passed had lost their game-keeperish trimness, and were as wild and beautiful as need be, though the trees were clearly well seen to.' (Morris, 2002). A careful care for nature is evident here and is deeply reminiscent of Wells' Utopian view toward countryside. Morris writes that it is wild enough but well cared for, directly correlating with the Utopians' desire to prevent selfish landowners from strangling their natural property. A stewardship of nature is a theme throughout Wells' utopian fiction. This has existed even stretching back to his pre-war work such as *A Modern Utopia* in which two characters debate the ethics of building a tramway:

'But they are beautiful!' I protested. 'They are graciously proportioned, they are placed in well-chosen positions; they give no offence to the eye'. 'What do we know of the beauty they replace? They are a mere rash. Why should we men play the part of bacteria'⁵⁷

Wells seems to come down on the side of building a tramway as long as it is done tastefully. This very much encapsulates the utopian attitude to nature. It must be respected and cared for but nevertheless bent to the will of mankind. This attitude is shared across his utopian texts despite *A Modern Utopia* (1905) being written more than a decade before-hand. The edition of *A Modern Utopia* cited above was edited and released in 1920 however, leading one to believe that it still to an extent reflected his views on what Utopia should be. Whilst Wells moved away from the stern ruling class of the samurai the care for the natural world and its control for the enjoyment and utility of man remains a common theme throughout his utopian works. This makes it easily believable that this is representative of his genuine socialist belief.

The people of the future utopia and the people of the Age of Confusion differ most notably in their socialisation toward violence and hardship. As we have already discussed in the previous chapter the

⁵⁶ Linda. H. Peterson. (2010). Writing Nature at the Fin de Siècle: Grant Allen, Alice Meynell, and the Split Legacy of Gilbert White. *Victorian Review*, 36(02), p.80.

⁵⁷ H.G. Wells. (1920). *Tono-Bungay ; A modern Utopia*. London: Odhams Press, p.369.

Age of Confusion mind is socialised for barbarity. This is a theme that continues in *Dream* (1924)

with the utopians completely unable to understand the hunting of animals for sport:

“Why did men do it?” “I don’t know,” said Sarnac. “All I know is that at certain seasons of the year the great majority of the gentlemen of England who were supposed to be the leaders and intelligence of the land, who were understood to guide its destinies and control its future, went out into the woods or on the moors to massacre birds. (*Dream*, 1924, p.39).

The passage continues and emphasises the stupidity and cruelty of these hunts and the irony that it was the leaders of the country who engaged in them. Wells points out that it was not simply the act of killing that excited them because this would have had them help in slaughterhouses rather the loud bang of the gun was pleasing to their simple minds. It is a scathing judgement and positions the utopians as intellectual and moral superiors. This is part of the separation between the Age of Confusion and the subsequent age of utopia. The mental faculties of the utopians have evolved past the base need for violence for violence’s sake. To a contemporary reader, the prevalence of hunting would have been ubiquitous and perhaps have gone unquestioned by them. Anti-hunting movements and legislation are a very modern concept. To hunt without need of the food is an unnecessary and bizarre act especially when one is repulsed by the idea of killing for sport. Here Wells demonstrates a societal difference produced by the Age of Confusion brain. Whilst the first world war represents the pinnacle of difference between barbaric and utopian society, there are a myriad of differences socially that Wells creates. It is differences such as these and living standards and education that demonstrate the sheer distance Wells must hurl his ideology to separate it from the cruelty of his own period. The very mode of thinking must be changed as well as the casting off certain traditions and customs. When examined there are aspects throughout the Age of Confusion society that separate it from the future utopia in fundamental ways. Wells must demonstrate these and demonstrate their distance from utopia to defend his ideology.

One of the greater themes of the text at large is the damaging way in which the society of Harry M. Smith treats the relationships of those within it. This is unsurprisingly thought of by the utopians as barbaric and confusing. Sarnac compares the two in the following:

Here we are free and frank men and women; we are trained so subtly that we scarcely know we are trained, not to be stupidly competitive, to control jealous impulses, to live generously... in that dark tormented world in which I passed my dream-life, all the business of love was covered over and netted in by restraints and put in fetters. (*Dream*, 1924, p.100)

This is another difference between the two societies in which we can witness an element of autobiography from Wells. He was well known as engaging in affairs and did so with the consent of his wife and in his actual autobiographies he referred to these affairs openly.⁵⁸ However we must be cautious in assuming the extent of Wells' own politicking within the text no matter how clear an employment of his own beliefs it may appear to be. It is instead thematically consistent with the utopia he has constructed. Throughout the text the free and healthy people of utopia are repeatedly placed in contrast with the dirty and stunted people of the Age of Confusion. It is a logical extension of the idea of a society in which no one jealously guards anything. This lack of conflict is in part what brings about utopia. This is a key point in demonstrating the difference between utopia and the age of confusion, the simple point being conflict. In utopia, all avenues for conflict are removed therefore jealously guarding one's lovers is not done. Busch remarks that a Wellsian utopia is constantly attempting to prevent the atomisation of society:

Only in the presence of society, that is to say of a network of secure interpersonal relations, can goals beyond the atomistic be formulated... In a Wellsian society the restrictions are restrictions upon the forces, internal and external, which would tend to atomize society through conflict hence for example the restrictions on private property.⁵⁹

This demonstrates the need for utopia to not engage in the conventional monogamy of the Victorian period. In monogamous relationships, there is inevitably jealousy and therefore conflict. We can also relate this to certain contemporary events. This text was written after the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 which moved divorce from the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastic courts to civil ones. It was written in favour of men, allowing them to file for divorce in cases of adultery when woman needed multiple reasons for divorce which had to include at least two of adultery, incest, bestiality and

⁵⁸ Andrea Lynn, (2001). *Shadow Lovers*, Boulder, Westview Press, p.xiii

⁵⁹ E.A. Busch, (2009). *The Utopian Vision Of H.G. Wells*, Jefferson: McFarland and Company Inc, p. 105.

abandonment⁶⁰. However, a year before the text in question was published the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1923 was published. This removed the double-standard allowing women to sue for divorce using only the charge of adultery and came as part of a wave of legislation on women's rights.⁶¹ Whilst the Act was not changed only as result of changing views toward equality it would be foolish to deny that perceptions towards women's rights were changing. This likely influenced Wells' conception of Utopia. We have already established he was in favour of sexual liberation and this factor helps demonstrate that the contemporary events surrounding this work suggest Wells' position on equality of the sexes. The utopia Wells envisions is one of perfect harmony. There cannot be any facet of society capable of inciting conflict. Wells' utopia must have sexual freedom and equality. It is therefore clear that this is not only a reflection of Wells' own proclivities but an absolute necessity in order to secure the internal logic of his socialist utopian ideal.

To conclude this text demonstrates a variety of contrasts between Wells' ideal utopian society and that of Victorian England leading up to and past the first world war. By doing this Wells not only distances his utopia from his own society but makes a case for its plausibility. By first criticising the governmental system at large and writing in detail on the negative effects of an uncaring society utopia is shown to be morally superior as well as intellectually. The use of certain historical events also adds to the historicity of the text securing the potential utopia to the factual past. This legitimises the possibility of the utopia in the far future. One of the most important differences between the two civilisations is their stance on education with the Victorian society educating its children very poorly. This is an incredible injustice to the utopians. To deny a child's mind the chance to grow is seen as very cruel as well as damaging to future generations. Wells occupied this position himself as the utopia he believed in required a great level of education for the masses. Another key point Wells uses to distinguish utopia from the Age of Confusion is private property. Landlords

⁶⁰ W.R Cornish, (1989). *Law and Society in England 1750–1950*. London: Sweet & Maxwell. p. 382.

⁶¹ Rebecca Probert. (1999). The Controversy of Equality and the Matrimonial Causes Act 1923. *Heinonline*, 11(33), p.33.

jealously guarding their land whilst letting it fall to ruin presents two problems that utopia rectifies. The first is the notion of private property entirely. As long as one person can own vast tracts of land they can live at the expense of others. As long as one person has what another cannot have it leads to conflict. Conflict, therefore, is to Wells a product of the Age of Confusion and its nation states. The second problem is that of stewardship of the land. As we have established above Wells is not in favour of nature being left untouched. Rather he prefers a careful stewardship of the land in order to please the eye and suit the endeavours of man. This is why across his utopian texts he describes gardens, and in particular in *Dream* (1924) why the utopians are so offended by the idea that land could be left to its own devices and spoil. The final and perhaps most autobiographical point Wells makes is that of relationships. The utopians are horrified by the restrictions made on love and sex in the past as to them it seems cruel. It is also inimical to the idea of a utopia as a land without conflict. Monogamy is seen to be cruel to the young and as it introduces conflict cannot exist within utopia. This is easily argued as a representation of Wells' personal views as not only was he a proponent of free love but he openly practiced it. He was the victim of many a scandal due to his relationships with many women. Not only this, but progressive movements at the time were beginning what we understand as the women's rights movement. As he wrote the text in question divorce laws were made more egalitarian. Not only this, but various safeguards for women and their children were brought in that laid the foundations for childcare⁶². This progressive context likely lent itself to Wells political and social beliefs. Utopia is a paradise of freedom, therefore the emancipation of women becomes a utopian socialist issue. This way Wells legitimises his personal view via a logical extension of the idea of utopia itself. *Dream* overall is a comparison that both questions the norms of Victorian society and attempts to vindicate the assertions of utopia.

⁶² C.S. Gibson. (2003). *Dissolving wedlock*. London: New York, p.85.

Chapter Three: The Shape of Things to Come

This final chapter will focus on *The Shape of Things to Come* (referred to after as *Shape*), a work both like and unlike those that have come before it. Yet again through the medium of dreams we see into both the past and future but rather than a true protagonist Dr Raven is merely an artifice for conveying the narrative. This is one of Wells' more unique texts in that it does not follow one character but rather touches upon many but frequently drifts into chronicling the imagined world of the future. This description is detached as it is filtered even in the narrative itself through two different people. It is written as an edited account of notes made by a Dr Raven who dreamt of reading a history textbook from the far future. This sets the reader at a bizarre distance from the origin of the plot resulting in the book's disconnected tone. It is more easily described as a future history or alternate history and details events leading up to 1933 and well after reaching into the year 2106.

It is similar to the previous texts in that it refers to a period in which mankind grapples with itself unable to truly outgrow financial systems and nation states but differs in one crucial way. As this text is written ten years after the previous two featured in this thesis we see a development of Wells' doctrine. Written in the midst of great societal turmoil, Wells was forced to acknowledge this did not look to be a world moving toward a socialist utopia. Unlike the previous two texts rather than compare the utopia of the future with the barbarous past this text chronicles the transition from independent nation states to the world-state of the future utopia. Crucially, this is done by the world-state militant, an enormously powerful dictatorship across the planet that enforces socialist living standards. This begs the question as to why Wells' style in writing utopian fiction has changed from the previous texts. This chapter will argue that it is due to contemporary factors. In the previous chapters we have seen how Wells contrasts utopia and his own era, using contemporary history in order to legitimise what he believed to be the coming utopia. Ten years later the world seemed more in disorder than it had previously been. Unemployment had increased over the

previous ten years⁶³ leading to the government having to reform what we would now refer to as welfare. This chapter will attempt to demonstrate how Wells' utopian beliefs have been altered by the passage of time and contemporary history. As Western society seemed in relative decline Wells was presented with an altogether new threat to his ideology. His attempts to demonstrate how humanity would rise out of the chaos of the first world war seemed a failure. This chapter will demonstrate that *Shape* is a direct response to this. The way in which Wells uses the narrative to demonstrate the various steps that lead to utopia and the amount of violence and control it requires show Wells' frustration and his reaction to contemporary events.

The first demonstrable difference between *Shape* and the two previous texts within this dissertation is the terminology used to describe Wells' own era. Rather than the Age of Confusion this is referred to as the Age of Frustration. This poses the question as to why use such similar terminology but replace confusion with frustration. The answer likely lies in the time in which it was written. The text was published in 1933, a full ten years after *Men Like Gods* (1923). By this stage predictions were being made that a second world war was on the horizon. Wells himself predicts it in the text itself and in his non-fiction writing. The following is from the latter:

From 1914 up to the beginning of 1918, when shortage of material and energy checked the process; and since the armistice there has been an industrious development of military science. The next well-organised war, we are assured, will be far more swift and extensive in its destruction-more particularly of the civilian population.⁶⁴

This is a clear prediction of what was to come nearly a full twenty years before hand. By the thirties it was no doubt clear to Wells that there would be mass conflict again and that it was only a matter of time as to when it would occur. It was the same year that Hitler came to power and transformed Germany into the notorious totalitarian state that would go on to commit atrocity⁶⁵. The various events that make up the time in which the text was published are extremely grim. It is perhaps the

⁶³ N.F.R. Crafts. (1987). Long-Term Unemployment in Britain in the 1930s. *The Economic History Review*, 40(3), p.418.

⁶⁴ H.G. Wells. (1921). *The Salvaging of Civilisation*. London: Cassell and Company, Limited, p.8.

⁶⁵ Ian Kershaw. (2014). *Hitler: Biography*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, p.233.

most desperate of the three texts this thesis analyses as it fervently attempts to contextualise the unrest of the time into the utopia of the future. This is supported by Clute's analysis:

Wells was writing at a moment of cultural despair that he was by no means alone in feeling. Nineteen thirty-three was the deepest and seemingly most inextricable year of the Great Depression, a point where the world's financial and economic systems seemed incapable of recovery.⁶⁶

Despite Wells' belief that socialism was soon to take hold and revolutionise humanity it seemed reality contrived to contradict him at every turn. The Soviet Union was continuing to brutalise and starve its own people, which Wells had seen the beginnings of first hand and claimed that the communist government was doing as well as was possible⁶⁷. Beginning in 1931 and continuing throughout the next two years a famine gripped much of Russia's agricultural regions. Despite attempts by the Soviet government to suppress this information news travelled by word of mouth⁶⁸. This combined with racist violence toward Jews in Germany shows a Europe in chaos. This left Wells in an unexpected position. Rather than the first world war shaking mankind out of the Age of Confusion it instead began a civilizational slump that would have lasting effects for well over a decade. With communism becoming almost blatantly tyrannical and fascism on the rise in Europe it must have been eminently clear to Wells that his utopian vision of the future and the series of events he presumed would lead to it were off by some great measure. The world was indeed progressing but not toward a bright and shining future of science and socialism. Rather toward economic failure and eventually more war. It was clear that this kind of progress was not what Wells had imagined as the future of the species. This text serves like the previous works featured in this thesis, to contextualise the problematic issues of the day within a framework that eventually leads to utopia, but is against a greater level of disorder. Wells first writes on the thirty years leading up to the publication of the book detailing the various economic issues and wars. After this point however

⁶⁶ H. G. Wells. (2006) *The Shape Of Things To Come*, New York: Penguin Classics, p. xx.

⁶⁷ H. G. Wells (1921). *Russia in The Shadows*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, p.12.

⁶⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick. (2000). *Everyday Stalinism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.42-43.

he imagines no amelioration to the current economic crisis. He foresees another great war, further economic and social collapse until finally the Dictatorship of the Air takes control of the planet and begins to usher out the old ways. This is done by taking control of all transport, education, government and agriculture. It also destroys religion worldwide. Once this is completed the dictatorship is retired in favour of the utopian world-state. The Age of Frustration, Wells' own period, is so inimical to utopian thinking Wells must invent nearly 200 years of radical change in order to defend his ideology.

By writing a future history Wells is taking a particularly academic approach to the creation of a fictional utopia. Not only this, but this is the first of his fictional utopias that requires a dictatorship to precede it and destroy all obstacles. This chapter will demonstrate that Wells' concept of the Age of Confusion has over time become the Age of Frustration as a result of history not conforming to Wells' predictions. Wells is therefore forced to contextualise even more upheaval and violence into his utopian history. Wells had a great deal of contemporary history that he had to explain away, attempting to defend his ideological fiction from the unfortunate reality he was presented with. Not only did mankind just suffer its first global conflict but the aftermath was not one resolute in maintaining peace. Standards of prosperity and growth had changed and would not revert back. Williamson writing on the upheaval of the time and the reaction to the Great Depression by Western government articulates this:

The longer-term effects were a new political pattern, new bases for economic and imperial policy, and new conceptions of the state. These formed the political, administrative, and intellectual context within which British policy was reshaped... In economic policy, efforts made during the 1920s to restore the pre-1914 international financial and commercial system collapsed during 1931 and 1932.⁶⁹

This real-world crisis becomes part of the narrative Wells creates very like the other texts this dissertation has focussed on. This is a necessity for Wells to defend his utopian worldview. In the

⁶⁹ Philip Williamson. (2013) *'National crisis and national government: British politics, the economy and Empire, 1926-1932.'*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.1-3.

previous texts the Age of Confusion referred to wars and societal upheaval. However, in this text the Age of Frustration whilst very similar refers to more than just conflict. Much of Wells' explanation of the Age of Frustration comes through economic failure and the failure of nation states. In this way this later text mirrors the immediate issues of its time:

From the very cessation of fighting in 1918 and onward it was manifest that this machinery was seriously out of gear. The economic history of the time is a story of swerves and fluctuations of the most alarming kind, each one more disconcerting and disastrous than its predecessor. (*Shape*, 1933, p.114).

It is clear there is a similarity between both Williamson's assessment of the economic upheaval of the 1930s and that of Wells. The initial setting of *Shape* (1933) is clearly based on Wells' interpretation of contemporary fears. As he wrote the text out of date financial systems were crashing down resulting in enormous problems. At the close of 1930 the national deficit of Britain was at sixty million, which by modern standards is two billion, and by 1931 over two million people were unemployed⁷⁰. Serious economic upheaval was rife making it highly likely that the opening of *Shape* (1933) was inspired by this. This chaos forced Wells to react and defend his utopian ideology which he did in two ways. The first is that the initial stages of his narrative were a reaction to contemporary events and mirrors them accurately. He is provided with a problem that is self-evident and has its origin in reality which he is able to use utopia to solve. The second is that it can act as a starting point as a transition from what the evidence suggests is a failed system to that which Wells is arguing for. This is clearly done in the following:

The year 1933 closed in a phase of dismayed apprehension... The wheels of economic life were turning only reluctantly and uncertainly; the millions of unemployed accumulated and became more and more plainly a challenge and a menace. All over the world the masses were sinking down through distress and insufficiency into actual famine. And collectively they were doing nothing effectual in protest or struggle. Insurrectionary socialism lurked and muttered. (*Shape*, 1933, p.116).

⁷⁰ Sean Glynn. and John Oxborrow. (1976). *Interwar Britain: a social and economic history*. London: Barnes and Noble, p.254.

Here we see Wells' contemporary history summarised by the opening of his narrative. The economic systems upon which the world had run up until that point are no longer fit for purpose. The vast numbers of unemployed are evidence of society's wasteful nature. Wells took this as evidence of a collective failure worldwide resulting in mass suffering. But it is crucial however, as this is the time in which the idea of socialism is truly birthed in the minds of the suffering masses. This is not only how Wells explains the trials of human society to fit within his narrative, but also how he surmises it will be transformed in the future. But for transformation to take place and be framed as ameliorative one must first frame the failures of the previous system as the above quote shows. Foot argues Wells was the greatest critic of the current world order: 'No writer of his time, prophet or propagandist, foretold more clearly how individual nation states, left to their own feverish devices, would plunge mankind into catastrophe'⁷¹. Michael Foot was a utopian socialist himself which perhaps explains his support for Wells. What this demonstrates is that Wells' writing proselytises for utopian socialism. It also demonstrates an engagement with contemporary events that fits the narrative Wells crafted across many texts. Foot's approval of Wells shows an example of the success of Wells' writing in proselytization. This demonstrates clearly that Wells was using his fiction to critique reality.

Western societal problems were not limited to the Great Depression but included open conflict between nation states. This text is as much a reaction to the first World War and the growing political tensions in Europe that suggested there may yet be another. War becomes part of Wells' criticism of the nation state and part of his overall argument for one world government:

It was only slowly during the decade following after the war that the human intelligence began to realise that the Treaty of Versailles had not ended the war at all. It had set a truce to the bloodshed, but it had done so only to open a more subtle and ultimately destructive phase in the traditional struggle of the sovereign states. The existence of independent sovereign states is war, white or red, and only an elaborate miseducation blinded the world to this fact. (*Shape*, 1933, p.102).

⁷¹ Michael Foot. (1995). *HG: The History of Mr Wells*. London: Transworld Publishers, p.150.

Foot's analysis of Wells seems even more pertinent in light of this quote, however it is important to once again demonstrate this book as a reaction to its context. Wells had been arguing in favour of and for belief in a utopian socialist future since the turn of the century. As discussed previously in this thesis the outbreak of the Great War was a blow to Wells' beliefs in a united peaceful mankind. However, by contextualising this as part of mankind's adolescence, the Age of Confusion, Wells was able to explain the Great War into his ideology. An explanation is required if humanity is on the cusp of genuine utopia only to conduct the most devastating and large-scale war in history. With the two previous texts in this thesis he uses various means to do this that all connect under the umbrella of the Age of Confusion. By explaining violence and conflict into the natural progression of mankind Wells defends his ideology. The Age of Confusion explains a world that appears to resist socialist living and a world-state. Mankind cannot yet bring itself out of savagery and must make mistakes and learn in order to better itself. This was the argument Wells presented in the early 1920s with the first two texts of this thesis and a number of his works of non-fiction. When we find him ten years later the war to end all wars seems not to have done so. Here Wells is presented with a genuine threat to his ideology. Wells yet again finds a way to argue the conflict of the world into his political beliefs, with the speaker in *Shape* (1933) referring to the confusion of the 20th century:

The world was not able to unify before 1950 for a very comprehensive reason: there was no comprehensive plan upon which it could unify; it was able to unify within another half century because by that time the entire problem had been stated, the conditions of its solution were known... From a vague aspiration the Modern World-State became a definite and so realisable plan. (*Shape*, 1933, p.259)

As covered previously in this thesis, Wells believed an open conspiracy of intellectuals would rise up the world over all in the name of their common goal: creating a socialist utopia. As this seemed like an exceedingly remote possibility, Wells was forced to alter his point of view. That the civilised world was in disorder and seemed close to another world war demonstrates a clear threat to Wells political position.

We can speculate that this threat to Wells' political position must have made him question his beliefs. Having had such a specific view of the future only for time to prove him wrong forced him to rethink his outlook. This is what leads to Wells writing on the Age of Frustration. In Wells' previous texts there had always been a peaceful transition to the new world order as the intellectuals of the world gradually direct the planet into the socialist utopia. This new 'World State Militant' can be interpreted as a reaction to the resistance of contemporary history to conform to Wells' predictions. Mackenzie supports this directly in the following:

The Shape of Things to Come, completed as H.G. began to work seriously upon his autobiography, was not irrelevant to the crisis of the early Thirties. That, in fact, was its starting-point. But it was deliberately designed as a work of prophecy... After attempting, in *Clissold* and the books which immediately succeeded it, to persuade his readers to improve the world, Wells concluded fear was a more potent incentive.⁷²

This illuminates the more aggressive tone of the text, demonstrating the effect Wells wished to have with his latest utopian work. We can witness this effect in how Wells frames the conflict in the following:

That precarious first world government with its few millions of imperfectly assimilated adherents, which now clutched the earth, had to immobilize or destroy every facile system of errors, misinterpretations, compensations and self-consolations that still survived to confuse the minds of men; it had to fight a battle against fear, indolence, greed and jealousy in every soul in the world, the souls of its own people most of all. (*Shape*, 1933, p.348). Here Wells portrays the new world order as precarious. This is the first instance in which Wells writes such nuance into the transition from capitalist nation states to a socialist world-state. In previous texts Wells has written the transition as an inevitable change as part of the gradual process of mankind. In this way *Shape* is a response to Wells' own work and how it failed to reflect reality.

This is supported by Busch as he describes how Wells' utopias must be internally consistent and respond to reality in the following:

⁷² Norman MacKenzie and Jeanne MacKenzie. (1973). *The Time Traveller: The Life of H.G. Wells*. London: Ebenezer Baylis and Son Ltd, pp.376-377.

Hence the importance of utopia's connection with what its readers know and, at least initially, believe; hence also, however, the importance of Utopia's acknowledgement, and encouragement, of other possibilities... Wells takes this latter point quite seriously, and his utopias show the result. In addition to the multitudes of dialogues between characters representing opposing, or at least differing, visions of the steps needed toward the utopian path, Wells' writings are filled with subtle undercuttings of his own prior positions. (Busch, 2009, p.66).

Here we see not only a development of Wells' writing and political doctrine but also an engagement with his own past writings. It could be argued the precipitous nature of the world-state Wells describes in *Shape* is in a sense a response to the sturdy, immovable utopias of his previous work. As we have already established the Great Depression had hit much of the Western world hard and tensions were rising in Germany. The coming second world war had in fact already been predicted not only by Wells but other figures of authority, such as General Foch at the armistice in 1919: This is not peace. This is an armistice for twenty years⁷³. It was clear to the people of the time that everlasting peace was a fantasy. We see this reflected in the teetering nature of the world state militant, forced to use violence to defend itself from primitive humanity. The desire of humanity to continually destroy itself is dealt with within this narrative. Violence and conflict have been woven into the text in response to contemporary factors.

In order to rescue utopian socialism from the jaws of a world seemingly intent on constant warfare Wells breaks down certain causes of conflict. Earlier in this thesis we have seen this described as part of the reason for the existence of free love within utopia as it prevents the atomization of society. This atomization can occur on a macro level in the form of nation states. Wells writes against nation states as we have seen, as he advocates a world-state in order to prevent conflict. The conflict induced by nation states is not macro however. This can be reduced down to an individual and is done so as *Shape* (1933) deals with the typical European in 1925:

⁷³ Murray Williamson; Jim Lacey (2009). *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War*. Cambridge UP. p. 209.

They were nationalist and patriotic, and none of them could tell what a nation was. It was only when institutions began to batter against each other, and leak and heel over, and show every disposition to go down altogether, that even intelligent men began to realise how haphazard, sentimental and insincere were their answers to the all-important question: 'What holds us together and sustains our cooperation?'. (*Shape*, 1933, p.261).

Here we see Wells justify the creation of the modern world-state through ignorance. He posits that the average man could not articulate why mankind cooperates if only in the disorganised way that it does. Wells does make a compelling case here. The average man or woman likely never thinks about the inherently combative nature of nation states. Struggle and competition for resources are natural consequences of two distinct peoples with conflicting interests. Wells reduces this down to the smallest possible level by arguing that the common man is unaware of even the basic reasons humans work together, regardless of why they might find themselves in conflict. If the existence of even two nation states demands warfare this explains constant tension in Europe. The proximity of the nations and their conflicts of interest will inevitably result in warfare. Wells writes on the desire for bloodshed among the individual in these states as well:

Millions of human beings went open-eyed to servitude, bullying, hardship, suffering and slaughter without a murmur, with a sort of fatalistic pride. In obedience to the dictates of the blindest prejudices and the most fatuous loyalties they did their utmost to kill men against whom they had no conceivable grievance, and they were in turn butchered gallantly, fighting to the last. (*Shape*, 1933, p.70).

From this perspective, the violence is roundly condemned. It is clear from the way in which the speaker fails to understand the personal motivation of the soldiers fighting and dying. It is as we have seen reflected in other texts by Wells during this thesis, that the Age of Frustration mind is alien to the mind of the utopian socialist. Whilst this could easily be argued as Wells' own perspective on the war that would be anachronistic. The absurdity ascribed to the action of the soldiers dying in droves is not the opinion of a narrator but rather that of the fictional character Dr Raven. As previously discussed, before the outbreak of world war one in the early 20th century Wells supported the conflict in order to defeat the imperialistic ambitions of the Kaiser. Throughout this thesis the argument of Wells has been clear that the conflict of his time was a brutal but necessary

affair in order to drag mankind into the next era. Wells made his position on the conflict clear in *The War Illustrated* (1914) which was a magazine published shortly after the first world war began. It contained the signatures of many public figures and contained many essays in support of conflict one of which was penned by Wells:

We are fighting Germany. But we are fighting without any hatred of the German people. We do not intend to destroy either their freedom or their unity. But we have to destroy an evil system of government and the mental and material corruption that has got hold of the German imagination... It is a war, not of nations, but of mankind. It is a war to exorcise a world-madness and end an age. (Wells, 1915, p.10).

This is an important demonstration in separating the voice of *Shape* (1933) from the voice of Wells himself. The two above paragraphs viewed in comparison seem to be of opposing viewpoints with one pacifist and one pro-conflict however this would be a simplistic reduction. If we take Wells' political stance as established by this thesis first we must recall that it changed throughout his lifetime, evolving as he wrote more and various events shaped his worldview. Overall he believed that society would transition by coming through a violent period, followed by an ascension to a socialist utopian world-state. This belief remained but was changed over time in how specifically the world-state would come to exist. In his earlier work in the 1920s he wrote the *Age of Confusion* and the conflict it brought as a nasty yet necessary part of defeating the notion of empire and ensuring the path to his future is set. However, in *Shape* this takes on a more nuanced approach and reveals weaknesses in his utopia and its history as a result of years of hardship and strife. The following refers to the finite time the world-state has to wrest control from all other belief systems on the planet:

It had to do that within a definite time. If it did not win within that time, then dissension and relapse were inevitable and one more century of blundering and futility would have been added to the long record of man's martyrdom. This new regime had to clean up the racial mind and if it failed then in all probability it would leave the race to drift back again to animal individualism, and so through chaos to extinction. (*Shape*, 1933, p.348).

The quote from *Shape* (1933) is once again demonstrative of how Wells' frames the future utopia as being contingent on action rather than an inevitability. A future in which humanity has surpassed

violence, nation states and indeed personal property is one that Wells wants but now recognises is something that must be fought for.

A consistent theme in Wells utopian writing is his negative view of religion. In *Men Like Gods* (1923) the socialist religion was one of science and they held no places of worship. In *The Dream* (1924) the inhabitants of utopia look back on religion as a cruel means of controlling the populace. In *Shape* (1933) Wells maintains his outlook that religion is detrimental to the cause of socialism. Wells writes that the Age of Frustration leads to rise in concern for religion and this in turn led to a worrying increase in puritanical thought (*Shape*, 1933, p.120). This is not however his main criticism for religion overall. Wells makes no distinction between religion and their goals and instead sees them all as an obstacle for the socialist world-state:

Christianity, Jewry, Islam, Buddhism and so forth which right up to the close of the twentieth century were still in active competition with the Modern State movement for the direction of the individual life and control of human affairs. Whilst these competing cultures remained in being they were bound to become refuges and rallying-shelters for all the opposition forces that set themselves to cripple and defeat the order of the new world. (*Shape*, 1933, p.396).

This demonstrates as we have already established that Wells saw religion as inimical to the Modern State, which is the way in which he refers to the utopian world-state. However, this passage illuminates a crucial reason as to why. Religions are specifically referred to as in competition with socialism. This is of course true as both seek to control and direct the lives of their adherents. However, the speaker clearly does not recognise divine intervention or believe that these institutions should be allowed to exist. This demonstrates a key reason as to why all religion under the world-state is disallowed. It represents a divergence from the previous texts studied however. In both *Men Like Gods* (1923) and *The Dream* (1924) religion shrivels and dies away naturally as a result of the greater focus on science that socialism brings. This is something that we can perhaps ascribe to Wells himself. Whilst the two previous texts were written in the 1920s and within one year of each another *Shape* was written ten years later. Indeed, if we take one of Wells's non-fiction texts

that he wrote in the 1930s we see his attitude toward religion has become more combative. *The Open Conspiracy: What Are We To Do With Our Lives?* (1928) as we have already discussed is written as a guide on how to drive the world toward a socialist utopia, with instruction on how various elements of society are to act and what should be removed. On religion, it is clear:

In the vast stir and occasions of modern life, so much of what we call religion remains irrelevant or dumb. Religion does not seem to 'join on' to the main parts of the general problem of living. It has lost touch... The clear-minded Open Conspirator who has got his modern ideology, his lucidly arranged account of the universe in order, is obliged to believe that only by giving his life to the great processes of social reconstruction, and shaping his conduct with reference to that can he do well in his life... Religion is the antagonist of self.⁷⁴

It is evident that Wells' position on religion became harder over time. This raises the question as to what brought on this change. We have already demonstrated some changes to Wells' imaginings of a socialist utopia and this is perhaps one of them. As referred to above Wells writes that the Age of Frustration brings with it an increased interest in mysticism and religion. This is not entirely invented. Whilst Wells' period was one of increasing secularism that challenged religion. This in turn resulted in a religious backlash. Evolutionary theory was a part of this and in modernity was beginning to take shape connecting mutation with natural selection in the mid-1920s to 1930s.⁷⁵ In response, famous physicist and astronomer Eddington wrote a book on how his understanding of science led him to believe in God.⁷⁶ This competition of belief is contemporary to Wells' writing *Shape* (1933). It is not unreasonable to assume that this influenced how he worked religion and its opposition to the world-state into his narrative. Dickson supports this in writing on Wells' relationship with religion:

Religion seemed to Wells the false doctrine which blighted life, the Victorian conventions and restrictions about sex something which his ardent nature longed to expose, and science the new illumination which would lead twentieth century man to a better world.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ H.G. Wells (2006). *The Open Conspiracy: What Are We To Do With Our Lives?* San Diego: Book Tree, p.26.

⁷⁵ Stephen Gould. (2002). *The structure of evolutionary theory*. London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

⁷⁶ Arthur Eddington, and Haldeman-Julius. (1930). *Why I believe in God*. Girard, Haldeman-Julius Publications.

⁷⁷ Lovat Dickson. (1969). *H.G. Wells: His Turbulent Life and Times*. New York: Atheneum, p.7.

Wells clearly had a disdain for religion that intensified as he believed that religion and socialism competed for the direction of a man's life. When we take this information and recall Wells' proclivities for extra-marital affairs it becomes clearer as to why Wells was so opposed to religion. As time wore it clearly became obvious to Wells that religion would not disappear quietly into nothing and instead must be actively supplanted and suppressed by the world-state militant. In recognising the danger religion poses to his envisioned utopia Wells ultimately becomes forced to suggest that religion be prevented entirely. Wells goes on to describe how the various religions of the planet disappear meekly as a result of various policies such as controlled education and the institution of one common language, English:

Christianity where it remained sacerdotal and intractable was suppressed, but over large parts of the world it was not so much abolished as watered down to modernity... The story of Islam is closely parallel. It went more readily even than Christianity because its school organisation was weaker... This success – the people of the nineteenth century would have deemed it a miracle – is explicable because of two things. The first is that the Modern State revolution was from the first educational and the secondary political. (*Shape*, 1933, p.396).

The above passage demonstrates two things. The first is that religion is actively worked against to wear it down over time until it ceases to exist in contrast to the other texts in this thesis through a conscious effort to remove competition for the focal point of mankind's life. The second is that this is performed through an educational system. Here not only is a concerted effort to destroy religion made through force it is also fought by propagandising it out of existence. This term is unpleasant to a modern reader but did not hold the same negative connotation to Wells. Utter control over citizens thoughts and movements is something that the Modern State moves towards and eventually achieves during the text. This is a belief that is reflected in Wells' non-fictional works such as *Anticipations* (1901). Wells writes that there are many things that are not under control that will be and that the values of this future society would shape the values of those living under it. (Wells, 1902, p.279). It is therefore safe to assume this aspect of the Modern State is a reflection of Wells' politics. This desire to phase out religion comes clearly as a result of religion being a competitor to socialism as the defining element of human life. This totalitarian aspect is perhaps the result of a greater problem. Wells throughout his literary career defended and championed socialism as the means of achieving utopia. However, history only seemed to disprove him at every turn. He was first

confronted with the Great War, then the Great Depression and as he wrote *Shape* in the early 1930s Wells correctly predicted the outbreak of a second world war. This presents the issue as to how humanity was to achieve utopia. Having already introduced the concept of the Age of Confusion, it was a simple matter to add to that the Modern State. This totalitarian government would take utter control by force and shepherd mankind through its' adolescence and into the socialist utopia. The term totalitarian is apt. In describing how the world-state militant takes control and destroys the world religions the word dictatorship is more than appropriate:

Now it had struck down the very head of Catholic Christianity and killed an officiating priest in the midst of his ministrations. It had gripped the vast world organisation, the Catholic Church, and told it in effect to be still for evermore. It was now awake to its own purpose. It was now awake to its own purpose. It might have retreated and compromised. It decided to go on. Ten days later air guards descended on Mecca and closed the chief holy places. A number of religious observances were suppressed in India, and the slaughterhouses in which kosher food was prepared in an antiquated and unpleasant manner for orthodox Jews were closed throughout the world. An Act of uniformity came into operation everywhere. There was now to be only one faith in the world, the moral expression of the one world community. (*Shape*, 1933, p.347).

This is unlike much of Wells' utopian literature as it describes such a brutal and terrifying control of the world. Wresting the freedom to worship from believers and even killing an officiating priest. The quote confirms that the world-state militant occupies the same place in the mind of man as that of religion, describing it as faith. This presents a strange contrast with the peaceful science loving utopians of the previous texts. Indeed, whilst they did not feature such detailed description on how utopia is achieved, no other utopian texts by Wells contains or condones such violence. The previous utopias were much less uniform and cultivated the freedom of each utopian, whatever it was that entailed. Here Wells fully changes course and writes a military, uniform, order obsessed society.

Haynes helps articulate the contrast in Wells' work:

In designing his utopian world-state, Wells was clearly torn between two divergent ideals- the desire for order and efficiency on the one hand and the desire to foster individual initiative on the other. These two diverse ideals issue in subsidiary conflicts between

freedom of movement and desire for privacy, between socialism and individualism, between devotion to the state and personal incentive.⁷⁸

This articulates the contrast between Wells' utopian desires nicely. As this text comes later than the others of this dissertation it is likely that Wells' frustration at contemporary events and societal disorder led him away from his belief in individualistic socialism and toward a more controlling kind. Within the narrative of the text once utopia has been fully achieved the militant arm of the worldstate is retired. This is arguably Wells' reaction to the disorder of his time. So severe is the disorganisation that a world-wide dictatorship must be put in place in order to stamp out subversive thoughts until finally individualism can flourish.

In conclusion, it is clear that Wells uses both his own political bias and contextual events to drive the plot of *Shape* in order to defend his ideological belief in a socialist utopia. This is done first by situating the narrative within his own context and framing the problems of his time as the problems of the narrative. This prevents problems like the Great Depression from appearing as obstacles to the future utopia and rather unpleasant but necessary stepping stones on the path toward it. The Great War is another of these events that would challenge the belief in utopia that Wells turns to his ideological advantage. The previous texts in this thesis have all framed the first world war in terms of gruesome necessity. This text is similar but also speaks on the war as though confused by the motivations to fight. This distances the speaker from the events themselves as they are blessed with the wisdom of the future. Wells' position here requires nuance to understand as he supported the war as it would lead to a defeat of imperialism and he hoped would usher in a new age. This was not the case so yet again Wells was forced to incorporate an extremely regressive event into his narrative in order to defend the future utopia. Wells approaches religion differently in this text, not arguing that it will gradually disappear over time but instead writing that the world-state militant will have to stamp it out in order ensure the supremacy of socialism. We can read this as a result of

⁷⁸ Roslynn Haynes. (1979). *H.G. Wells, discoverer of the future*. London: Macmillan, p.118.

Wells witnessing over time how religion was not meekly disappearing and had well-respected voices to defend it. This is yet another example of how Wells uses that which challenges his belief in the Modern State and turns it to his advantage, incorporating it into his narrative as part of the slow road to utopia. This text and the discrepancies between it and those previously analysed in this thesis demonstrate the changes contemporary history made to Wells' ideology. He was forced over the course of many years to alter how he believed utopia would come about and what methods that would require as over and over his own era disproved his utopian predictions.

Conclusion

It is clearly demonstrable that Wells' ideological position is intrinsically linked to his speculative fiction and that he uses his fiction to respond to contemporary events to protect his ideal imagined future from them. Each text demonstrates this slightly differently but all include descriptions of a disordered and confusing era- the Age of Confusion- from which rises the socialist utopia. By doing this Wells can argue the conflict of his time is part of the prelude to the socialist utopia and in so doing defend his deeply held beliefs. A criticism of this could be that this is a too autobiographical reading of Wells' work but as already stated it is clear that Wells saw his fiction as a political tool and injected his beliefs into his fiction. This thesis therefore grants a new insight into Wells' later works, showing them to be reactionary attempts to situate contemporary history within the timeline of his fictional socialist utopia, a utopia Wells truly believed in. This possibility however became ever more remote as time wore on. This thesis has used a great deal of historical context in order to frame Wells' position and demonstrate how contemporary history affected his work. The greatest event is without doubt the first world war, a war which whilst initially supported by Wells led to such catastrophic after-effects it began to threaten his vision of the future. It is shortly after that *Gods* (1923) is written and published, including the first mention of the Age of Confusion. From then on in Wells' speculative fiction he uses the upheaval of the time as a frame from which to both defend and argue for socialism. Each text was analysed in chronological order as this allows us to track the changes in Wells' doctrine and demonstrate how this came as a response to certain historical events. As time draws on and the world seemed at greater conflict than before Wells was forced to continue to defend his socialist vision, writing yet more chaos into the prelude of his dreamed utopias.

Men Like Gods (1923), *The Dream* (1924) and *The Shape of Things To Come* (1933) all have their narrative opened on immense societal disorder. Whilst these events need not be based on real ones, genuine historical events are used in order to set the scene at which the text begins, framing the upheaval and struggle so as to accomplish two goals. By setting the scene in his fiction with contemporary events Wells situates the narrative in reality. Not only this, but by the heavy contrast

between the conflict of his own setting and the peace of utopia Wells reveals how far advanced utopia is. This promotes socialism over nation state capitalism. Wells turns the catastrophes of his time into unpleasant necessities on the road to a better world. The first chapter established Wells' relationship to the Soviet Union and detailed the excuses Wells made for the tragedies it caused. The line spoken by Urthred the utopian referring to the atrocities committed to end the Age of Confusion is an example of the justification of tragedy. Wells excuses tragedy in both his fiction and non-fiction as long as it is on the road to socialism. Wells makes the argument that it is a necessary part of mankind's evolution toward utopia which explains the barbarity of the more primitive characters. The characters from *Earth in Gods* (1923) and the Age of Confusion era characters from *Dream* (1924) seem almost predisposed to violence and their savagery is explained as a result of the period in which they live. By framing his own society as primitive, Wells explains any contemporary conflict that may otherwise distance it from utopia. Not only this, but it contextualises any societal ills that might have made socialism seem an unlikely future into the history of the socialist utopia.

A key point in understanding Wells' bias is illuminated when he writes on how socialism requires a departure from religion, an argument that is present throughout all the texts analysed in this thesis. This is contingent to utopia as religion creates conflict, something which cannot be tolerated. Wells positions belief in supernatural religion against science and progress thus there is no choice but for religion to be left behind. Religion is left behind in the same way other conflicts of the Age of Confusion are left behind for the general good. Wells consistently writes a worldwide consensus on leaving any causes that might compete with socialism behind, until he writes *Shape* in 1933. In this text religion and all other societal dissent to socialism is forcibly stamped out to ensure the complete control of the world-state militant. It is an excellent example of the claim of this thesis, that Wells uses his fiction to react to contemporary events to defend and proselytise for his socialist belief. The greater emphasis on military might and forced conversion to socialism and socialist teachings is easily argued as a reaction to Wells' frustration at the disorder of his time. Rather than a slow improvement following a period of uncertainty it seemed as if the world was only heading toward

greater decline. Ten years after he published *Gods* (1923) it clearly seemed unlikely to Wells that a slow transition to socialism was ever going to take place. The only way he saw of rescuing his utopian dream was through strength, and forcing the world to comply. Wells is both arguing in favour of socialism and demonstrating why it has yet to come to pass successfully. By referring to contemporary realities at odds with socialism he can criticise these realities whilst justifying that his utopia seems highly unlikely.

Another key point in which we see how Wells proselytizes for utopia over his own society is the way in which children are educated. Wells establishes it is through education that utopian values are trained into children and natural human aggression is trained out. As the second chapter demonstrated education at the turn of the century was very poor. Whilst it had recently become mandatory what was considered a minimum standard for education was exceedingly low. Wells himself was the victim of a poor education and went on into further vocational education which eventually enabled his writing. This is highly similar to the protagonist of both *Gods* (1923) and *Dream* (1924) leading one to believe this similarity is no coincidence. It is easily understood that this is evidence of Wells' autobiographical impulse injecting himself into his work. This is yet more evidence that Wells' political beliefs are represented by his fiction. Wells himself suffered as a result of too little education and prospered once he was granted further education. It is no surprise that in his writing on the ills of the early 20th century, poor education is among the greatest. The utopia Wells espouses relies not only on socialist education but is populated by physically superior specimens than ordinary people as a result of eugenics. Both of these state ordained processes breed out the aggression of the Age of Confusion. This careful advancement of human biology and psychology is explained as many generations in the making, with the utopians living thousands of years in the future. Wells' argument is dependent upon this. Wells is attempting not only to justify the possibility of reaching utopia but why his own period seems so at odds with a perfect society. This point is dealt with by assuming contemporary mankind is still in its infancy.

Shape (1933) is perhaps the clearest text in which we see Wells react to his contemporary political and social landscape with regards to conflict. Both *Gods* (1923) and *Dream* (1924) deal with armed conflict in a similar way to one another. The analogous conflicts to the first world war in both texts holds great significance for the timeline by which mankind reaches utopia. Both great wars presage a collapse of society, an outright failure of the old systems that demonstrate the need for a new society. *Shape* (1933) does not include this. Although the first world war and other armed conflicts are referred to as part of the destabilising zeitgeist of the Age of Frustration, armed soldiers go on to enforce socialism across the globe. Very like an empire the world-state militant takes control of all military power and transport. This is a great shift from the previous texts and the reason can be demonstrated from when *Shape* (1933) was conceived. Written and set a decade after the two above texts were written and set there is a decided narrative shift in the way in which Wells deals with utopia and how he writes its ascendancy. Once again Wells writes contemporary history into the text as a means of criticising his own period and working chaos into the history of utopia. At the time at which this text was written the Great Depression was crushing populations across the western world. As Wells writes on mass confusion and the failure of previously successful economic systems it is easy to see the influence of contemporary history. It is not surprising that rather than the Age of Confusion Wells uses the term the Age of Frustration. The various ills with which he was at odds a decade previously seemed only to have worsened and so yet again Wells is forced to write them into a history that culminates in utopia. This decade has clearly made Wells' utopian views more aggressive. The future world-state is preceded by a world-state militant that through the use of military force controls all commerce and dispersal of goods. In response to the failure of his world to live up to his plans Wells writes his most tyrannical utopia to date. The contrast with the previous texts is what makes it an excellent example of how Wells responded to his time and how he was forced to measure his utopias against the disorder that surrounded him.

In closing, it seems clear that Wells' ideology was threatened by contemporary events and that he used his fiction to defend it. There are weaknesses to the thesis overall however. There are large

stretches of narrative and analyses thereof that could not be included due to constraints on the word limit. If given the opportunity I would extend this research further and truly explore each text's narrative from start to finish, in particular *Shape* (1933), as it is the longest and most convoluted text and certainly merits more study. Another criticism one might make is that it is impossible to discern the intent of the author and the reasons they had for writing such texts. This is to an extent true, however it is important to remember the various contextual and non-fictional works and elements I have included that support my claims. Wells himself claimed to write from a journalistic perspective and advocated for socialist propaganda. To argue that his works were written in an ideological vacuum is anachronistic. One must consider that Wells dedicated much of his life and work to the cause of socialism and we see it reflected in his fiction, non-fiction and other public works. The inclusion of contemporary events that in turn lead to his socialist utopia in his fictional texts are clearly a reaction to those events and an attempt to contextualise them into his belief system. If one is to consider a written work, one must consider why it is written. Wells wrote to promote an imagined future and continued to write to defend it.

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