

In this 1905 philosophical essay/science-fiction novel hybrid, H. G. Wells carefully outlines and vividly describes how his “Modern Utopia” would look and function through the voice of an unnamed fictional narrator who, along with his companion, the botanist, imagines himself transported to a parallel utopian version of planet Earth.

During the course of the novel, the voice of the narrator slowly pieces together the various elements of his imagined utopian society, from the economic system to race relations and marital law. So how does this century-old fantasy hold up against the scrutiny of a cynical 21st century reader? Let’s take a closer look.

Firstly, Wells wants the reader to be fully aware he thinks his utopian dream is realistically implausible, but not entirely impossible. He concedes that for it to function, society would have had to have developed a completely different set of ideals, traditions, ideas and purposes. The narrator surmises that for a perfect society to exist, the entire world would have to share one governing body, a World State, if you will. Such a state would share one world language (an amalgamation of a dozen different pre-existing ones), one economy, one currency and would be heavily connected by high-speed electric trains.

Penguin Classics



A MODERN UTOPIA

H.G. Wells — Penguin Classics



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