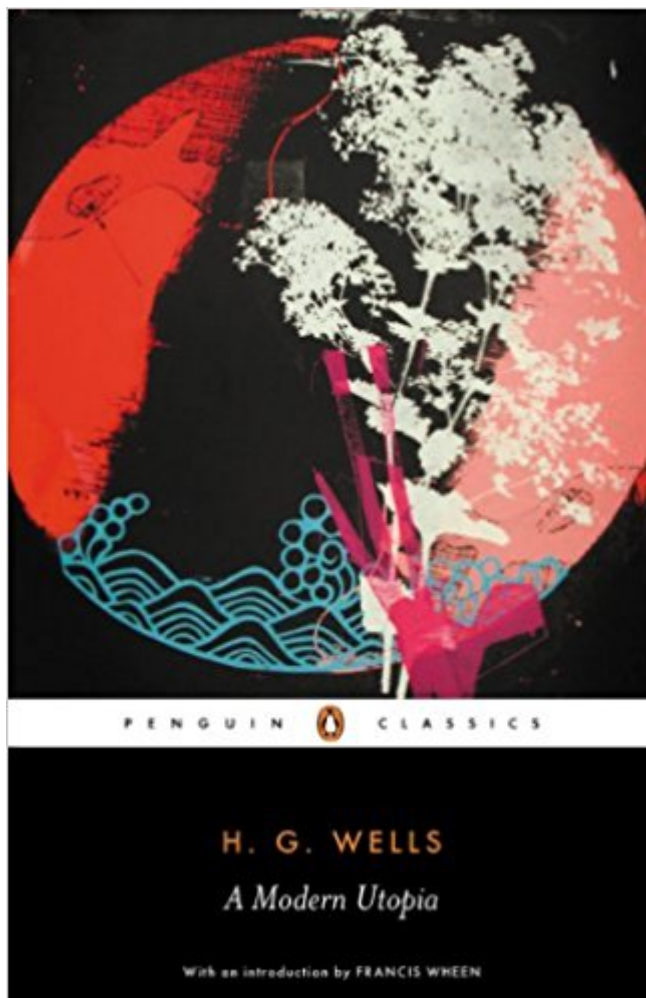


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A Modern Utopia (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

In *A Modern Utopia*, two travelers fall into a space-warp and suddenly find themselves upon a Utopian Earth controlled by a single World Government. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

H.G. Wells was a professional writer and journalist, who published more than a hundred books, including novels, histories, essays and programmes for world regeneration. Wells's prophetic imagination was first displayed in pioneering works of science fiction, but later he became an apostle of socialism, science and progress. His controversial views on sexual equality and the shape of a truly developed nation remain directly relevant to our world today. He was, in Bertrand Russell's words, 'an important liberator of thought and action'. Francis Wheen is a journalist, author, and broadcaster. Gregory Claeys is a historian at the University of Royal Holloway, London.

Wells, like many utopian writers, has no real idea of how to get from where we are to where he would like to see us be. His solution is that the revolution and the power structure that lies beneath

this utopia happened at the hands of an altruistic warrior/statesman class. Sadly, for a work that spends much time examining other utopias written before it, this is a crippling defect. But that examination of other utopias is like a short college course in the history of utopias. Other aspects of the society Wells posits are worth the read as well. How he deals with wealth and property, for example, to allow individuals to self-aggrandize but not tip society's scales by passing on this wealth to their progeny balances individual property rights against the needs of the social organism in a way that makes sense even after you put the book down and are no longer under its spell.

H.G. Wells is best known for his contribution to the sci-fi world, writing such books as *War of the Worlds* and *The Time Machine*. But few know of his works in history, politics, and social commentary. He even wrote textbooks. Wells was also a very outspoken socialist. His book, *A Modern Utopia*, is his proposal for a world state. He states, "a flexible common compromise, in which a perpetually novel succession of individualities may converge most effectually upon a comprehensive onward development." I found the book rather interesting, although it contradicts what I believe. I think it is important to respect others and learn from their point of view. H.G. Wells is an amazing author. I would recommend this book to anyone. If for no other reason than because it is a piece of historical literature.

This isn't the best thing Wells wrote. Little character development. Of interest mainly to those interested in utopian novels.

Interesting expansion on Plato's *Republic*. I had mistakenly always thought of Wells as just a pioneer in science fiction, boy was I wrong.

Plato and Ayn Rand have their Utopias and did many other philosophers including Karl Marx. Buy this book and you'll see so many parallels to Orwell and Aldous Huxley and yes, of course Jack London's masterwork *The Iron Heel*.

In narrative style, this is about the oddest Utopia story I've seen. It alternates almost seamlessly between the usual kind of Utopian fiction and a here-and-now narrative in a voice that seems to be Wells's own. In the here-and-now, the speaker ponders the human state and reasons closely on an idealized world that still has room in it for fallible, real people. Then the thought gels, and the fantasy world comes to life to play out the points discussed. A companion joins our speaker throughout the

story, fact-like and fantastic parts both, and embodies plenty of the human condition that would need to be accommodated: in need of immediate gratification, given more to involuntary emotional reaction than to thinking, and self-centered in a way that's blind, innocent, and pervasive. As promised in the title, it's modern in ways that many more recent Utopias aren't. Wells considers the unavoidable inequality of child-bearing duties, and turns full-time motherhood into a paying profession. He acknowledges acquisitiveness and cupidity - rather than wide-open warehouses, his Utopia uses money to add wisdom (or at least thought) to the choices made in what to take home. He discusses race and racial superiority in terms that his 1905 audience would have found familiar. In the end, he argues for economic and legal equality not on the grounds of actual equality, a point that he leaves undecided, but on the grounds that no group in history has ever shown that it deserved to hold the upper hand. There's more, much more, including a wealth of references to other Utopian literature - that by itself might almost have justified the cost of this book. Wells's interleaving of multiple levels of fiction also makes for an unusual reading experience. But it's the ideal world itself that stands out, mostly by not standing out. Real people didn't set out to create a bad world, so most of what we've worked out has a lot going for it. Above all, what we've got has room in it for many kinds of people, not all of whom will or can devote themselves to some moral ideal. "A Modern Utopia" is complex and layered in its presentation, but equally complex in what might look like banality of solutions to pressing social problems. Social improvement mattered too much to Wells for him to let it seem glib or impossible.-- wiredweird

First off, let me say, I think H.G. Wells is one of the best authors of all time. But when it comes to designing examples of human society he needs help. For example - to keep people employed they are sent to where the labor is needed. They are given just the minimum, shelter and food and clothing, for what is looked at as the minimum of work. In other words, a labor force of wage-slaves, forced to move around the planet at the needs of the factories and businesses. If you HAPPEN to be educated enough or hyperactive enough to do more than the normal amount of work you can gain more or, in the case of women, be allowed to have kids. And if you are really smart, healthy and active you can become Samurai - nobles of the world. The end results sounds more like a system set up in the Middle Ages, with most of the labor moving to where the jobs are, a small middle class of above normal workers and a class of supermen, and some women, at the top. I am sorry Wells, but this is not a Utopia. Even after talking about individualism and the equality of women in the end this more like a nightmare, and a boring one at that. You should read it, because many modern books on utopias and dystopias will use it as part of the background on the subject.

But I don't think anybody should really talk about it as a serious system of World Government.

Nothing like HG Wells and his Utopian dreams. This is almost a tongue in cheek view of a modern utopia in his mind.

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