

H.G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia*: una narrazione a più voci

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DOI: 10.26379/1382

Abstract

A Modern Utopia (1905), one of Wells's favourite books, was his first approach to the dialogue form that he acknowledged as his debt to Plato's *Republic*. This work, in the form of a travelogue, is shaped as a hybrid between a philosophical discussion and an imaginative narrative, and is peculiar at two distinct, interrelated levels: it has a complex structure made of two paratexts – "A Note to the Reader" and an Appendix, "Scepticism of the Instrument" –, eleven chapters and an introduction entitled "The Owner of the Voice" (who is both the narrator, one of the two characters of the novel, and Wells's probable *alter ego*); it questions the very Utopian genre from the inside, as the author declared he had conceived it on "sound pragmatic lines" and from a skeptical outlook. Wells prospects, here, a new kind of Utopia, which is kinetic, does not pretend to be an alternative perfect world, and it is not situated in an enclosed space, but is a World State. The present article argues that the most original aspect of this book is the presence of a plurality of voices: the narrator, his double (his "Utopian self"), the botanist (who embodies the Owner of the Voice's opposite), and *the intrusive chairman* (the author himself). This narrative feature contributes to the dialogic character of *A Modern Utopia*, which has been aptly defined as "a self-conscious rewriting of the utopias of the past".