

Master's Thesis Project

Cover page for the Master's thesis

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ABSTRACT:

This thesis has the purpose of examining the relationship between *culture*, *society* and *politics*, focusing on the late-nineteenth century and twentieth century and how we can still identify how past changes to either of these three are still influential on our contemporary society in the twenty-first century.

It does this through an in-depth *textual analysis* of Herbert George Wells' science fiction novel *The War of the Worlds* from 1898 and George Orwell's dystopic satire *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from 1949. These authors were chosen for this purpose as both H. G. Wells and George Orwell were active participants in the political communities of the British Left and considered themselves socialists; furthermore, both wrote articles and books about their political views, and have left lasting a lasting impact on politics and culture as we know it, and thus also on society. In addition, the choice fell on the genres of *science fiction* and *dystopia*, for the reason that they are both used in connection with one another as a part of *speculative fiction*, in which an author tries to envision a possible future and make their reader consider a new perspective on what they thought they knew. *Science fiction* is a genre in fiction that deals with imagining the impact of either actual science or imagined future science on the people, while *dystopia*, and its counterpart *utopia*, are imagined societies in which humans lead lives that are either horrible and dehumanizing in the case of *dystopia*, and an idealized society in which humans live in harmony and free of suffering.

Each novel is analyzed based on a set of themes. In the case of *The War of the Worlds*, the analysis covers: the invasion narrative, the Martians and imperialism, civilians in war, and how the genres apply to the novel. Likewise, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is analyzed based on: the control that the party Ingsoc has over the nation of Oceania and its people, how mass surveillance and the police state is used to enact said control, and how the genres apply.

The analysis is preceded by a section consisting of research into the chosen genres, the childhood and youth of H. G. Wells and George Orwell, as well as how they came to develop their political opinions and theories. The section for H. G. Wells goes into the relationship he had with his family and how it shaped him, the continued conflicts between his mother and himself about which path he should take in life – scholar or working a trade – and how he developed a socialist ideology centered around the scientific theories of Thomas H. Huxley’s “ethical evolution”. The section for George Orwell details his life as a young man caught between his father’s “Tory England” and his mother’s “Bohemian England”, and the experiences that led him to being a firm ally against the British Right while simultaneously never fitting in with the British Left either.

Research and analysis is followed by a discussion that focuses on the results of the analysis and how it relates to what was discovered during the research. The discussion goes into the impact that the authors’ political leanings have had upon their fiction, why the genres matter, and the how’s and why’s of the influence they have had on society, culture, and politics. It also discusses the implications of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* being written and classified as a political satire as well.

The thesis is finished with a final conclusion that summarizes the aim and purpose of the thesis, the method of the analysis, the reasons why the choice fell on the use of the works by H. G. Wells and George Orwell, and the results of the research and discussion.

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English Master's Thesis

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H.G. Wells and George Orwell: Science-Fiction, Dystopia and Politics

INTRODUCTION:

If there is one thing that is for absolute certain, it is that society, culture and politics are irrevocably connected and mutually influence one another. Changes to the culture of a country affect how its society acts, which changes which political parties and movements are dominant in the government, which again causes changes in the general culture, just to give an example of one way the interplay between these three factors can develop. Thus, if one wishes to analyze or otherwise examine the culture of a given culture, they will also have to involve the possible influences of the society and politics that surrounds it and vice versa. Furthermore it is also important to factor in the time period or era where that culture was the most prevalent; to give an example, there is a great difference in culture and political climate between the Edwardian Era and the age of the World Wars, despite the Edwardian Era being the immediate predecessor to the World Wars. And even though seventy-five years have passed since the end of World War Two, we can still find remnants of that culture and its politics impacting our contemporary, twenty-first century world.

An invaluable source to look to in order to get a grasp on cultural changes during a given time period is to turn towards the *fiction* that was written throughout it, as well as the authors who wrote it and the *genres* they worked with. Because by gaining an understanding of which types of fiction were popular in a given and era and why, we are also given insight into which mindsets, hopes and fears were dominant at that time, and how they had an impact on the general society and politics. Especially the genres of *science fiction* and *dystopia* are of interest for this purpose as they have

repeatedly been used as a method for authors to voice their speculations about an uncertain future marked by rapid changes. Two of the perhaps most well-known authors of science fiction of the late-nineteenth century and the twentieth century are H. G. Wells and George Orwell. Wells is, in terms of fiction, famous for works such as *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The War of the Worlds* (1897), while Orwell's fame is linked to his magnum opus, the dystopian satire *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). However, while widely remembered as authors of fiction, both Wells and Orwell were also highly active in the political communities of England and both wrote several scholarly articles and novels in which they voiced their opinions, ideas and predictions for how the future would turn out. It is in their fiction that we are made privy to some of these predictions and even fears in a way that is widely different and, in some ways, more liberating than if Wells and Orwell had confined them to their academic writings.

It is for these reasons that this thesis will examine the cultural- and political impact of H. G. Wells and George Orwell through their fiction, as well as the influence that fiction focusing on science fiction and dystopia have had on contemporary society and popular culture. This will be done through a thorough textual analysis of *The War of the Worlds* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, focusing on a key set of topics for each novel. For *The War of the Worlds* the focus will be on: the invasion narrative, the Martians and the imperialist parallels that can be drawn to them, the role of civilians in a war, and how science fiction and dystopia apply to the novel. Likewise, the analysis of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* will be centered around: the nature of Ingsoc and Oceania in connection with how an oppressive government controls its society, mass surveillance and the *police state* as a part of that control, and the narrative impact of science fiction and dystopia. These topics have been chosen for the analysis of each book, due to the reason that each novel and author present the reader with different sets of fears and disaster scenarios. For *The War of the Worlds*, there is e.g. the fear of invasion and being horribly outmatched by an unknown enemy, while in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

there is the fear of an oppressive government come to power through legitimate means, amongst other issues. Finally, the thesis will be closed by a discussion of how Wells and Orwell, as well as their writing, have served as both negative and positive influences on modern politics, as well as how and where we can see the impact of that influence, based upon the results of the prior research and analysis.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

As stated in the introduction, culture, politics and society go hand in hand; trying to examine one without also including the others is a difficult task, if you are not relying solely on quantitative data. A good way to analyze that culture is to look at the fiction written during a particular era or time period, as well as the authors who wrote it, as things such as speculative fiction can tell us a lot about the prevalent mindset at the time. Science fiction and utopic/dystopic are especially suited for this purpose as they can tell us a lot about which views the people had about the future, be they optimistic or pessimistic. Hence this thesis aims to examine H. G. Wells, George Orwell and their respective novels *The War of the Worlds* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in order to examine the impact of science fiction on society, as both authors are not only known for writing some of the most famous and well-known works of science fiction, but also actively engaged with the political and academic communities, writing articles about a society they saw as declining. The following research, analysis and discussion on Wells, Orwell and their works will be conducted with the following research questions in mind:

- H. G. Wells and George Orwell are still relevant as authors today. Not just in terms of their fiction, but also their academic and political writings with far-reaching influence on both politics and common society. In what ways, and in which areas of world politics and society, can we find proof of this influence?

- In which ways can the political opinions and concerns of H. G. Wells and George Orwell be identified in *The War of the Worlds* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*?
- *The War of the Worlds* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* fall under the genres of science fiction and dystopia. How are these genres used to convey the authors' messages about e.g. foreign invasions and extremist politics?

METHOD:

Textual Analysis:

Textual analysis as a method is both very simple and complicated at the same time, as it is heavily dependent on the context of what you are analyzing. A brief definition can be found in the chapter on “Textual Analysis” in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Method* (2018), written by Jennifer M. Hawkins. She calls it a method in which the reader seeks to understand “...language, symbols, and/or pictures present in texts to gain information regarding how people make sense of and communicate life and life experiences.” (Hawkins 1754). This definition however, while not inaccurate, is extremely simplified – there is much more to the method than analyzing texts and figuring out how people create and convey *meaning* and *sense* in different ways. Another way of approaching the method, as Catherine Belsey puts it in “Textual Analysis as a Research Method”, chapter 9 of the book *Research Methods for English Studies*, is that “[t]extual analysis as a research method involves a close encounter with the work itself, an examination of the details without bringing to them more presuppositions than we can help.” (Belsey 160). This means that you as a reader of the text, no matter if the subject is a physical text or some version of visual- or audio media or something else entirely, needs to examine the details of the text, but without letting any preconceived presumptions get in the way of the actual analysis. However, that does not mean that research is not a significant part of conducting textual analysis as well. Using an analysis of the painting of *Tarquin and Lucretia* by Titian as her example, she asks relevant questions based

on preliminary background research about rape and the power-struggle it symbolizes; but she recognizes that this alone is not enough for a credible analysis of the painting. “How would we justify calling that the beginning of a research project? Stating that this painting is about rape hardly constitutes research, since it is no more than paraphrase. ... Bringing together the painting and 1970s feminism, however, might begin to look like the beginnings of a hypothesis...” (Belsey 163). She follows this up with the statement that research should always contribute something new to the analysis; it does not have to be revolutionary or something that nobody else has thought of before, and it is perfectly fine if what is discovered and debated through the research and analysis is but a small piece of a much bigger whole (Belsey 163).

We must keep in mind, though, that there is much more to textual analysis than just reading a text and applying research to it. As mentioned previously, a text can be anything from a printed book to an interview on television to a conversation in a chatroom between two or more people, and the list goes on. Furthermore, there are many different branches of textual analysis that are more or less prevalent in different fields and not just literary studies, which makes it all the more complicated to explain its methodological background. And as Elfriede Fürsich states in the article “In Defense of Textual Analysis” (2009), “Unlike its social-scientific counterpart, i.e., quantitative content analysis, text analysis in the cultural-critical paradigm does not draw from a united intellectual and methodological tradition. The method is often poorly defined, and is employed in myriad ways. Its history is similarly fractured.” (Fürsich 240), therefore, it can be difficult to pin down exactly which kind of textual analysis is being used. Fürsich goes on to list the different names for- or kinds of textual analysis, those being as follows: “...thematic analysis, critical discourse analysis, ideological analysis, or more specific types such as genre analysis or cultural analysis.” (Fürsich 241). As goes for all kinds of textual analysis, they rely on different kinds of strategies for interpreting the text, but though these differences might be subtle, they are nonetheless

very important. The rules for the kind of textual analysis used also differ greatly regarding how rigid they are (Fürsich 241).

The textual analysis conducted in this thesis is based around a close reading of *The War of the Worlds* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, with focus on the genre and theme of the novels, based around how they can be interpreted in regards to Wells' and Orwell's political background and the societal environment they were written and published in.

THEORY:

In the following sections we will be going over the genres of *dystopia*, *utopia* and *science fiction*, as well as the early life and political orientations of George Orwell and H. G. Wells. As they often go hand in hand, the genres are covered under a united headline, while the lives and politics of Orwell and Wells each have been given their own respective headlines and sections.

Dystopia and Science Fiction as Genres:

The *dystopia* is a concept which consists of “an imagined world or society in which people lead wretched, dehumanized, fearful lives.” (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary), and it is the antithesis to the concept of *utopia* which is a society or place that has reached complete perfection concerning its government and societal conditions (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Ryan F. Peters says in *The Global Dystopian: Twenty-First Century Globalization, Terrorism, and Urban Destruction* about the two that: “...utopian and dystopian theories and stories are not just elements along a spectrum, they are direct antipathies, linked by their constant analysis and appraisal of the other.” (Peters 19). Thus, you can not talk about one without also mentioning the other, because without utopia there would be no dystopia and vice versa.

Originally coined in 1516 by Thomas More in *Utopia*, taken from the combination of the Greek words “outopos” and “eutopos” – meaning “no place” and “good place” respectively – the utopias we have come to know through fiction are often supposed to show an idealized and perfect society

where there is no such thing as suffering. A world where disease, poverty, class-struggle and pollution etc. have all been wiped out in favor of national or even global equality, the eradication of illnesses and an end to the destruction of nature. But as Maria Manuel Lisboa comments in *End of the World: Apocalypse and its Aftermath in Western Culture*, while it is commonly used to describe a perfect place, the etymology of the word "...involves an in-built ambiguity..." (Lisboa 138) which is highly relevant to the discussion of the interplay between utopia and dystopia (Lisboa 138). Because while an overly simplified way to explain the difference between the two concepts is that if one is "heaven" the other is "hell", one needs to consider the method in which this so-called heaven is achieved, and what the governing body does in the name of maintaining their utopia. As has been seen in many stories that fall under the genre of dystopia, such as Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), at the very core of their being is a utopia gone terribly wrong. Because what are the leaders of this supposed utopia willing to do to maintain their status quo? How far are they willing to go? To give an example, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* sees the governing party Ingsoc using constant surveillance and an everlasting war to keep its citizens in control, all while making the citizens wholeheartedly believe that this is as good as it will ever get for them through e.g. rewriting news and history (Orwell 45-46). Ingsoc is willing to do unspeakable things to any party member who deviates and wishes to break free from the reality that they have so carefully constructed. This matches what Lisboa writes about utopia and how it is often perceived and understood: "First, utopia is utopian only according to the parameters of the relevant power hierarchy ... Second, utopia is only achievable at the price of exclusion or elimination (of difference, of dissent and of the concept of a democratic entitlement to Truth). And third, utopia is only maintainable through the elimination of individual autonomy in favour of despotic control." (Lisboa 148-149). Viewed from this perspective, the differences between what is utopia and dystopia blur, as a utopia idealized as a perfect world; but how perfect is that world if its

existence and upkeep is dependent on eugenics and total control of the masses? Lisboa's point of view also matches up with John Huntington's definition of dystopia found in the article "Utopian and Anti-Utopian Logic: H.G. Wells and his Successors" (1982) which states that: "[d]ystopia (the bad place) is for our purposes utopia in which the positive ("more perfect principle") has been replaced by a negative ... Both are the expression of a synthetic imagination, a comprehension and expression of the deep principles of happiness or unhappiness." (Huntington 124). Per Huntington's definition the two share a common structure, thus the difference between them is only on the surface level – both try to express and understand what needs to be done in order to solve hypothetical, social dilemmas, but on opposite sides of the spectrum (Huntington 124). It is precisely the dichotomy between utopia and dystopia and how it is viewed in relation to science fiction which will be analyzed and discussed later on in this thesis.

Science fiction is a branch of speculative fiction that deals "...principally with the impact of actual or imagined science on society or individuals or having a scientific factor as an essential orienting component." (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Its beginnings as a genre is often credited to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) just over two hundred years ago, in which science gave birth to a lifeform that was engineered rather than birthed naturally (Peters 101). The genre has since then developed and changed rapidly and is today perhaps most famously known for being the genre that gave us tales of alien invasions and travel through both time and space, as well as for giving us authors like H. G. Wells and George Orwell amongst many others. However, science fiction is much more than a genre meant to entertain or horrify us; as Peter Y. Paik states in the introduction to *From Utopia to Apocalypse: Science Fiction and the Politics of Catastrophe*, while it is a genre that is often dismissed and trivialized because of the medium it is mostly produced through – comic books and movies or TV-shows – the narratives seen in science fiction "...are capable of achieving profound and probing insights into the principal dilemmas of political life."

(Paik 1). As he goes on to say, there is merit to this claim since science fiction lends itself very well to discussing philosophical topics and speculations such as the question of realizing utopia and which issues might arise within the radical branches of politics, because the genre itself has roots in philosophic speculation (Paik 1-2). This is exactly what two science fiction novels to be analyzed discussed in this thesis do, as well, albeit in different ways. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell uses the genre in a relatively minor way to set the stage of a world just 35 years into the future, but a way that is nonetheless similar to our current levels of technology, and to theorize on how the world might look should a *totalitarian* power take control of the world – that is, a power or government that has complete control over its citizens (Cambridge Dictionary). On the other hand, H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* relies heavily on the now classic science fiction sub-genre of creatures from space invading planet Earth – a sub-genre which he was the inventor of (Sherborne 125) – to carry the narrative as the protagonist tries to survive in the war ravaged lands, bringing a spin to the invasion narrative that, at the time, was unheard of and all the more shocking for it (Sherborne 126).

Eric S. Rabkin takes it a step further in “Science Fiction and the Future of Criticism” (2004) and calls science fiction a *cultural system*, by which he identifies it as “...a set of typical dramatic situations, recurring elements, even themes and styles, as science fiction does by including, for example, the encounter with the alien, time machines, wonderment about the definition of the human, and streamlining.” (Rabkin 462). He supports his argument by pointing out that science fiction fits the definition of *system* found in the Oxford English Dictionary, which states that a system is a “...set or assemblage of things connected, associated, or interdependent, so as to form a complex unity.” (Rabkin 461). He calls it the most influential cultural system, as we are constantly bombarded with new changes to society and technology, bringing with them both new fears and apprehensions, but also hopes and dreams for the future – this goes for both politics and common

life, as a lot of science fiction is created in response to current events (Rabkin 462-463). By virtue of treating science fiction like a cultural system, it also opens up for using it as a tool of societal criticism, something that Leon E. Stover also briefly comments on in 1974 under the headline of “Social Science Fiction”, albeit a little differently than Rabkin. Stover identifies what he calls social science fiction as “...critic's category embracing modern science fiction (a publisher's category) and the older tradition of Utopian literature.” (Stover 21), and that it is a part of science fiction in which the setting itself is the subject, rather than merely a part of the background. However, he also states that few novels written as social science fiction actually contribute to how we understand society, calling them polemical and essentially calling them little more than empty protests outside of a few examples (Stover 2). This goes against what both Paik and Rabkin believe, however, with Paik stating that: “Science fiction can accordingly serve as a vital instrument for the investigation of the contingencies governing political life, the forces that structure and dissolve collective existence, by providing the reader with visions in which familiar realities are destabilized and transformed.” (Paik 2). It is, of course, important to remember that Stover’s text is from 1974 is thus 44 and 30 years older than Paik and Rabkin’s research and texts, meaning that they have had a lot more time and experience in engaging with science fiction much more advanced and boundary breaking than Stover did. Finally, to close this section, Rabkin finishes his text by making the following prediction about science fiction as a cultural system capable of criticizing society: “I believe that ultimately, as we see by comparison with critical writing about the western and about rock and roll, science fiction criticism, like one of Zhang's doors, will open us to a more expansive criticism, one that will be more systemic, more collaborative, and more quantitative.” (Rabkin 472).

H. G. Wells – Childhood and Youth:

Herbert George Wells was a man of humble beginnings and grand endings whose legacy today is, for the most part, reduced to a handful of the many works of fiction he wrote in the years from

1894, when the serialization of the book now known as *The Time Machine* started in the magazine *The New Review* as “The Time Traveller’s Story” (Sherborne 101), up until his death on August 13 1946. Wells, however, was so much more than one of the fathers of modern science fiction; in fact, as Adam Roberts points out in the preface to *H G Wells: A Literary Life*, science fiction was “...a mode he himself pretty much disavowed in later life as he moved into different literary genres...” (Roberts vi), thus it is likely that he would have disliked his legacy being defined by his science fiction. But Wells was also a scientist and, perhaps even more importantly, a prominent political voice in an era of world wars and great international conflict, speaking out in favor of socialism and his own form of *cosmopolitanism*, in which the goal is to see the disbandment of the individual nations of the world and the establishment of united World State in their place (Partington 21).

H. G. Wells was born in Bromley on September 21, 1866, into a lower-middle-class household to Joseph “Joe” Wells and his wife Sarah (née Neal) as their fourth child, two years after the tragic death of their eldest child and only daughter: Frances (Sherborne 26). The family was one of turbulence; while they initially managed to meet and fall in love when they served at Uppark House near Midhurst, the introverted and conservative Sarah and outgoing and outspoken Joe were a mismatched couple, which showed all throughout their married life (Sherborne 22-23). The beginning of the end came in 1877; Joe, who had earned money on the side from playing cricket, fell from a makeshift scaffolding and broke his leg, ruining his chances of ever earning money through the hobby again (Sherborne 34-35). This cut in income, amongst other issues between them following Joe’s accident, was the straw that broke the camel’s back; in 1880 Sarah was offered the position of housekeeper at Uppark House and separated from Joe. (Roberts 3).

Perhaps it was this poor match in terms of personality and worldviews between his parents, and thus conflict in his homelife, that resulted in young “Bertie” growing up to be somewhat of a man of conflict as well; if not with his surroundings, then with himself. As Sherborne points out in *H.G.*

Wells: Another Kind of Life (2013), Wells' autobiography makes it apparent that he believed himself to be a replacement for his sister. It was a role he resented, leading to clashes with his mother several times throughout his life as he refused to follow the path she set for him. Instead he took after his father in terms of nature and personality (Sherborne 26), and while he suffered of a poor health as a child and adult, he was not afraid to fight and stand up for himself (Sherborne 29). But young Wells was also an inquisitive child with a great sense of imagination, artistic talent, and desire for learning. As reported by both Sherborne and Roberts, this love for books and knowledge was born in 1874 when he was seven years old, when he accompanied his father to a cricket match and was dropped on a tent peg by a friend of his father's. The result was a broken leg – an almost prophetic accident to be mirrored by his father in the future (Roberts 2). As both authors also cover, the leg ended up healing badly and had to be rebroken and set once again, and it was in this time of recovering that he took up the habit of reading. "His father brought him books home from the Bromley Institute. ... Amongst the ones he could remember were books of imperial adventure, Wood's *Natural History*, histories of the Duke of Wellington and the American Civil War, the works of Washington Irving and Fenimore Cooper as well as 'the bound volumes of *Punch*'..." (Roberts 2-3). Sherborne comments on the young Wells' choice of literature that he had little interest in fiction at this point and especially enjoyed the accounts of warfare (Sherborne 29-30). Could it have been at this point in his life that Bertie Wells started gaining an interest in the world that would eventually evolve into his cosmopolitan mindset? Most likely not, but it was without a doubt this incident that sparked his desire for learning and following the path of academics. Unfortunately his father's accident brought an end to his early schooling and between the ages of thirteen and fourteen² Wells found himself apprenticed off to a drapery like his elder brothers,

² NB: Sherborne writes that Wells was thirteen when he was sent to his first apprenticeship, whereas Roberts puts him at fourteen (Roberts 3)

setting off on what Sherborne calls the first of five false starts (Sherborne 38). Because Sarah desperately wanted her son to learn a trade and follow a pious path, and his ever present resentment of being a “replacement child”, Wells made it the mission of his young life to rebel against his mother and everything she stood for; he “...had begun a lifelong rebellion against his mother’s wish for him to be like her.” (Sherborne 41). And what a rebellion; in five years he started five different jobs, three of them apprenticeships that he was let go from through either deliberate sabotage of his employers – as was the case with at least his first and third job as an apprentice to a drapery and a chemist respectively – or through skipping his duties to read and study on his own (Sherborne 38-47).

Notable are the experiences of both his second and fifth job, as both positions put him in a teaching environment. The second job had him work at the school of a distant relative named Alfred Williams as an “improver”. There is room for a lot speculation concerning what exactly Wells’ job was;

If Bertie was a registered teacher-pupil, then he would be paid by the state and would follow a course of instruction delivered by Williams that led to an entrance examination for teacher-training college. Given Williams’s inexperience, however, it is quite possible that the job was actually for a ‘monitor’, a teaching assistant who received a lesser payment and no recognized instruction and whose career prospects were less certain. (Sherborne 39)

What is for certain, however, is that while aspects of his work was unpleasant for him at that age, he came to admire and look up to Williams as a source of inspiration, and it was a better job for him than at the drapery (Sherborne 40). Unfortunately for Wells it came to light that Williams’ credentials as an educator were forged, and he was once again sent back to his mother (Roberts 3-4). In contrast, his fifth job was much more pleasant and had another option not been presented to him in 1884, it might have been where he would have found his niche: as a teacher at the Midhurst

Grammar School under Horace Byatt. This opportunity had its proverbial origin during his third job as a chemist's apprentice, throughout which he attended additional lessons in Latin at the school. It just so happened that Wells had impressed his teacher who had not forgotten him and welcomed him warmly. It should be noted that getting his parents to accept this fifth "start" caused major conflict between himself and his parents, but that Wells "...knew where his interests and abilities lay and may also have sensed that, in the modern, more socially mobile world, education was becoming a route into professional society in a way that it had not been for earlier generations." (Sherborne 47). Ever the rebel, he was determined to leave behind the trade business for good, and after promises of a higher pay, they finally caved and Wells settled in at the school (Sherborne 46-47). The time at Midhurst was one in which the young Wells truly thrived; provided with an environment in which he could both teach and be taught, he found renewed confidence and a will to fight for his own interests. "Previously he had been on the receiving end of others' decisions; now, approaching the age of seventeen, he had discovered a power in himself to make events go the way he wanted, bringing a ferocious self-assertion to bear against the visible worlds of his job and his family and the less tangible worlds of class, respectability and religion." (Sherborne 48). For once in his life, Wells had the right conditions to grow and develop as a person as well as a novice writer, and with a good mentor in Byatt, this could very well have been the final stop for him. It was also during this job that he slowly started developing his political opinions and voice; the details of these opinions, however, will be discussed in a later section. But Wells desired more than what Byatt could offer him, and in 1884 when he was offered a full scholarship to the Normal School of Science to become a teacher-in-training, he took it – even when it meant going behind Byatt's back and accepting the scholarship without first informing his benefactor (Sherborne 51-52). While it would take him awhile longer and many other near failures at obtaining a degree in the sciences, it was this opportunity that marked the tender beginnings of the man who would come to be counted

amongst the founding figures of modern science fiction, as well as one of the most prominent political voices of the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.

Wells – Politics and Cosmopolitanism:

It might seem strange at first to hear that Wells' socialistic and cosmopolitan worldviews started when he entered the classroom of Thomas Henry Huxley, one of the most prominent scientists and evolutionary theorists of the Victorian Era (Roberts 6), but it is nonetheless a claim that holds a lot of merit. Because, as John S. Partington explains in *Building Cosmopolis: The Political Thought of H. G. Wells*, unlike his contemporaries on the left wing, rather than having Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels or the almost utopian mindset of Socialism and many more as his primary inspiration, Wells based the majority of his early ideology – and thus his later cosmopolitanism – on Huxley's idea of *ethical evolution* (Partington 27). Ethical evolution is the belief that the “cosmic processes” of the world can be influenced by the so-called “ethical processes” of humanity; in other words, natural selection – and thus evolution – can be influenced and affected by humanity's innate ability to use ethics when making decisions. “In other words, humanity, being a product of evolution, can not be viewed as anything other than a 'natural' creature. Therefore, humanity's actions, be they 'ethical' or otherwise, must be understood to be a part of natural evolution, influencing the 'cosmic process' of the general world ecosystem.” (Partington 28). As Partington goes on to comment on page 29, Huxley believed that humanity could, through the use of the ethical processes, modify or even combat evolution itself, though his goal was not to present a solution. Rather his aim was to guide people and help them free themselves of what he saw as delusions of philosophical thoughts which had invaded political thought.

Wells idolized Huxley and his ideas, thus it is not that big of a surprise that ethical evolution continued to be a part of his political mindset for the remainder of his life, though his ideas changed and developed significantly throughout the years. In 1901 he even stated that “I believed then that

he was the greatest man I was ever likely to meet, and I believe that all the more firmly today.” (Partington 27). However, while the two shared a lot of their beliefs and ideologies, Wells differed from Huxley in that he placed a majority of his focus on achieving ethical evolution through educating the youth; this aspect of Wells’ ideology will be elaborated later on in this section. Furthermore, while Huxley was indeed a steady influence upon Wells’ ideologies, he was not the only source inspiration. Like Orwell, Wells was somewhat of a follower of the socialist ideologies at the time, but not in the strictest sense of the word; as Partington puts it: “The sheer diversity of opinion in the late-Victorian and Edwardian period made socialism into something of a 'pick-and-mix' ideology ... Wells used it in just this way, finding inspiration in the views of such thinkers as Engels, Morris and Shaw while constructing his own ideology based upon his experience and his education.” (Partington 31). Indeed, it was because of this diversity in the opinions of socialists at the time that there was room for Wells to create his own form of socialism based around Huxley’s ideas. Furthermore, it was in the years of the emergence of socialist societies such as the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour Party, amongst others, that he was introduced to socialistic ideas (Partington 32). In 1903 he joined the Fabian Society, and from there he set out to spread his own brand of socialist ideology: an amalgamation of late-Victorian socialism and Huxley’s philosophy (Partington 34-35). He would continue to develop and adapt his ideology in response to the rapid changes he witnessed in the world around him, but one aspect which remained consistent was his ideas about socialism and education. Wells created a concept which he called the “collective mind”, first named in 1908, though this would often change. The concept covers a methodology in which socialism and socialization is spread throughout society gradually, but through continuous and stable education of socialist principles amongst the population. To quote Wells himself upon the matter:

The only conceivable rule in a Socialist civilization is through the operation of a collective mind that must be by its nature constructive and enterprising, because only through the creation of such a mind can Socialism be brought about. A Socialist State cannot exist without that mind existing also, and a collective mind can scarcely appear without some form of Socialism giving it a material body. (Partington 35)

Wells valued education as a part of socialism highly. If the population was not educated on socialism and how to participate in a socialist society, how would it ever have any hope of succeeding? This belief was prominent in his ideology up until the end of his life, even though it would come to take many different forms, and often accompanied by other ideas as Wells saw the world progress through both World Wars and other major changes.

Something to pay special attention to about Wells' political ideas and opinions is that in his later years, aside from being in favor of education for all people and calling for reforms to education (Partington 88), Wells was also an advocate for universal human rights, publishing the work *The New World Order* in 1940, long before the initial drafting of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Roberts 384). As Partington comments, "[w]ith the outbreak of the Second World War, Wells saw an opportunity to embark in a practical way upon his project for world unity. That possibility he called the 'Rights of Man' campaign and it was first raised during the discussion of Allied war aims in the first few months of the conflict." (Partington 126). Wells' believed that World War One could have been ended much sooner, had the fate of the German forces been certain before the Allied Forces' victory, and he sought to if not prevent another situation as what happened at the creation of the Versailles Treaty, then "...to establish clearly defined unanimity of outlook, so that the common man everywhere and the decent enemy citizen may know where he stands." (Partington 127). We should be careful not to uphold Wells as a beacon of progressiveness beyond his years, however; as both Partington and Sherborne mention,

Wells was of many different and sometimes opposing opinions throughout the years, and he was very much a man born of his age on certain points, and is not above criticism. In *Anticipations* from 1901 he speaks in favor of eugenics (Partington 50) and, as Sherborne covers, he was not free from falling into casual anti-Semitism at times despite being a close friend and ally of several Jewish people (Sherborne 150-151). This, he argues, is due to the fact that Wells first and foremost was “...one who had little sympathy for any form of nationalism...” thus he “...was exasperated by Zionism.” (Sherborne 151) when, at the time, the Zionist movement amongst the Jewish people had no country or territory to feel any such nationalism or territorialism about. Furthermore, as “...Wells came to see that one of the consequences of globalization would be multiculturalism.” (Sherborne 151), he states that it would only be natural for Wells to feel anxious about the consequences caused by a movement so insistent on feeling nationalism for something they did not have. But Wells was also willing to learn and grow from his mistakes, as proven when he was critiqued by Joseph Conrad and F.W. Headly, who both called out for Wells to reflect upon his position as a popular writer and his interpretations of evolutionary theory respectively. In the following three years his theories and writing changed drastically to be much more inclusive of all sorts of social strata and did away with any sort of involvement of eugenics (Partington 53-54). Instead he would come to speak in favor of racial equality, as well as free speech and birth control just to mention a few examples, and would continue to do so until the end of his life in 1946 (Sherborne 319).

George Orwell – Childhood and Youth:

It is likely that there are only a few people in modern history who can be said to be as contradictory in their opinions and political leanings as the man we know today as George Orwell, though the claim can be made that he was born to be a man of political paradoxes, perhaps even to himself.

Eric Arthur Blair, which was Orwell's actual name, was born in 1903 in India in a small Bengal town near the border to Nepal, where his father worked as a quality control supervisor for the British Opium Department. In 1904 he journeyed back to England with his mother and sister, living there until he returned to Burma in 1922 and joined the Indian Imperial Police as a junior officer (Pynchon V). His early years were, by all means, a normal life for a boy growing up as part of what Orwell himself later called the "lower-upper-middle class" of British society (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 29); he spent his early youth as a student at Eton Academy, which is where Eric Blair created the foundation that would turn him into the George Orwell that we have come to know – that is, a persona of an outsider which he kept up until the day he died (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 1). But it is also interesting to note that his mother's side of the family favored what Jonathan Rose, in chapter 3 of *The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell*, calls "Bohemian England". This England favored literacy, art, and socialistic leanings over the aristocratical and imperial society that was his father's "Tory England"; Mrs. Blair, born Ida Limousin, was half-French and had learned to paint with a French artist, and his sisters associated with the Fabian Society, leading to young Eric absorbing elements from both "sides" of England (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 29). As Rose notes: "From the beginning, then, George Orwell had his feet planted firmly in two different and antagonistic worlds. That helps to explain why, for all his professed clarity and straightforwardness, he was in fact a marvellously paradoxical observer of the English scene, contradictory in the finest sense of the term." (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 29). It was during his time at Eton that Orwell slowly turned towards rebellion against the society that he was growing up in, as he experienced his fellow students rejecting the extreme nationalism and propaganda that was prevalent in the 1920s – as such, we can say that this was the start of Orwell's political interest and his rebellious nature (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 1). That said, while Orwell longed to rebel, John Rossi

and John Rodden point out in the first chapter of *The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell*, his “rebellion” took the form of going against all sources of authority, as well as “...a simple dislike of his better-off, nouveau riche fellow students.” (*The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell* 2), all with roots in a belief that he did not fit in with them. As Rossi and Rodden thus puts it, Orwell’s budding political opinions “...were little more a facile form of egalitarianism.” (*The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell* 2). Superficial though his opinions were, it was nonetheless Orwell’s starting venture into politics and opinions differing from his father’s own, which would later lead to an estrangement that would last many years, when Orwell, newly returned from work in Burma, left behind his father’s Tory England to become a part of Bohemian England (*The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell* 33).

When looking at Orwell’s writing as a whole, it is clear that he – like so many others of his time – was affected by the changing world he lived in. He grew up during the First World War, participated in the Spanish Civil War, and served in the Home Guard during the Second World War while rallying the people to join the fighting – completely contradicting his past supporting of pacifism, mind you (*The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell* 1, 5-6). Furthermore, the author of *Orwell in Context: Communities, Myths, Values*, Ben Clarke, shows how Orwell’s newfound patriotism manifested itself through a desire to fight in the war actively, once it was unavoidable. “In a letter to Geoffrey Gorer, dated 10 January 1940, he complained that ‘I have so far completely failed to serve HM. government in any capacity ... now we are in this bloody war we have got to win it & I would like to lend a hand’ (12:6–7:6). The sentiment contrasts with the opposition to war he frequently expressed between his return from Spain and the outbreak of the Second World War.” (Clarke 111). Though perhaps it is exactly because Orwell lived in an age of changes that he, too, changed his opinions and beliefs to such a degree, especially when his own ideas about socialism and injustice did not align with the popular or “proper” opinions of the “official Left” in British

politics (Fusco 13), leading to Orwell posthumously being an author that both Right and Left-wing politicians have tried to claim for their own to add merit to their viewpoints (Fusco 3-4).

Orwell – the Political Paradox:

We can date the “true” beginnings of Orwell’s political opinions, beyond his school-day rebellions, to his years of serving in the Indian Imperial Police from 1922 to 1927 (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 2). Having already witnessed the great economic differences between Britain’s social classes, going to school with students who were born into families of much greater wealth than his own (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 29); thus, by the time Orwell journeyed to India, he was aware of the great differences within the British Empire. It was during those five years of serving in the Indian Civil Service that his childhood rebellions turned into anti-imperialism and a hatred of the Empire (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 2). He realized e.g. what Christopher Hitchens in his essay “Orwell and the Liberal Experience of Totalitarianism” calls “...a dirty secret at the heart of power.” (George Orwell: Into the Twenty-First Century 82): that dirty secret is the inherent injustice of a society in which an Indian or Burmese man, no matter how qualified or educated he is or how well he can speak the English language, would never be welcomed in the “English club”, not even as a guest, forever banished to back doors. And yet even the lowest and most unqualified Burmese girl can be granted entrance to the homes of rich and influential British officials, so long as this too is through the back door and money is involved (George Orwell: Into the Twenty-First Century 82). It was this experience with the inequalities within the British Empire, beyond the economic differences between himself and his schoolmates, that had Orwell grow jaded and sharply critical of the Empire and Tory England. In his book, *Our Orwell, Right or Left: The Continued Importance of One Writer to the World of Western Politics*, C. J. Fusco quotes Orwell on his stance on the British Empire and what they were doing in India and Burma: “I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and

the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically – and secretly, of course – I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters.” (Fusco 56). That is not, however, to say that Orwell was completely on the side of the Burmese people, either. He came to hate the Empire, but he also disliked the Burmese people as a group because of their bad treatment of him as just another part of the empire that was oppressing them; a mutual dislike that he found he could not blame them for. “Even though Orwell himself disliked the Burmese people and was hated by them, he was able to see that blame should be put not on the oppressed people whom Orwell had disliked, but, rather, squarely on the process of Imperialism itself.” (Fusco 57).

The influence of his experiences in Burma and his disillusionment with Tory England and the Empire can be found not just throughout Orwell’s writings, but it can also be argued that it shaped his entire experience as a socialist writer; as Rodden notes in *Every Intellectual’s Big Brother: George Orwell’s Literary Siblings*, three factors made Orwell an outsider to the contemporary society of socialist intellectuals in the 1930s, known as the Auden-group, after W. H. Auden, a prominent poet of the Left at Oxford (Rodden 14): his birth into the lower middleclass of British society, his relatively high age compared to those of the Auden-group, and finally, and most importantly, those five years serving the police in Burma. Because while Auden and other intellectuals of the time went on to most notably Oxford or Cambridge and immersed themselves in the literary revolutions and political art, Orwell was in almost “lagging behind” his contemporaries, never quite at home with the modernists of the 1930s and experiencing what they would several years behind when they were already out of fashion for intellectuals in England (Rodden 19). However, as Rodden also points out:

...this way of explaining Orwell's development— as if he experienced a literary-political lag vis-à-vis his generation as a result of having gone to Burma rather than university— frames a comparison which, once again, rests on a superficial appearance of mere belatedness to his contemporaries. But it is not just that his experience was later; his experience was different from theirs, and he learned different things from it. (Rodden 19-20).

An argument can be made that the reason why George Orwell appears as such a political paradox, is because his career as an intellectual in the 1930s-1940s was influenced by such vastly different experiences and results, when compared to his contemporaries. Burma saw Orwell turn staunchly anti-authoritarian and anti-imperialist; travelling to Wigan in Northern England to report on the conditions of the poor and the working class cemented his belief in socialism, though it was his own take on socialism that combined "...egalitarianism, idealization of working class culture, and an intense dislike of Marxist bickering." (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 4); finally, going to Spain and writing of, as well as actively participating in, the Spanish Civil War against Franco's fascist regime had him experience what he thought was going to be a "...collaboration between anarchists, Socialists, and Communists, a brotherhood united in order to fight a common Fascist enemy..." (Fusco 30), but in the end he was faced with the realization, as Fusco quotes Orwell and emphasizes "...that among the parties on the Government side the *Communists stood not upon the extreme Left, but upon the extreme Right.*" (Fusco 31). This and his following realization that despite being privy to the crimes of the Soviet communists (George Orwell: Into the Twenty-First Century 59), his fellow socialists back in England continued to be in support of the Stalinist regime. "After Spain, Orwell saw his "truth" being most threatened by the continuing Stalinist bent of the British Left. ... he campaigned energetically to publicize what he learned from his experience of POUM's suppression in Barcelona, and he felt ostracized because he was challenging a party line." (Rodden 30). Is it because of these vastly different experiences that

Orwell managed to both be and not be a part of the Auden generation of socialist intellectuals, allowing him a unique position of being a socialist, even as he disagreed with them. “Because he was never directly affiliated with the left-wing writers of the “Auden generation” ... he could stand at once inside and outside the Left. He thereby could both participate in and give witness to his generation’s experience, reflecting its larger dilemma between political detachment and commitment.” (Rodden 11). Therein lies the paradox of his character, because how can a person support something when they can also turn around and criticize it at, seemingly, the drop of a hat? A good reason for this, Rodden argues, lies in how Orwell experienced his disenchantment with authority while in Burma, calling it “an ideological vaccine” that “...inoculated him against leader worship and literary cliques, and thereby saved him from the more serious political errors of his generation...” (Rodden 22).

As Ronald F. Thiemann points out in the essay “The Public Intellectual as Connected Critic: George Orwell and Religion” (*George Orwell: Into the Twenty-First Century*, chapter 6), Orwell’s introduction to the type of socialism that came to shape his political views, until the day he died, was in the fall of 1934 through Francis and Byfanwy Westrope, who introduced him to the Independent Labour Party (ILP). The ILP was, amongst other things, a party that was built on egalitarianism and non-Communist Marxism, working for what Thiemann calls “ethical socialism”, aiming to spread liberty to all social classes and thus obtaining the equality that was central to the socialist platform. We can ascribe a lot of Orwell’s political beliefs following his Burma days to the ILP, based on how traces of the ILP’s beliefs can still be found in the more mature reflections of socialism that Orwell has created; from here, Orwell went on his journeys to Wigan and Spain, and the rest is history. Furthermore, it was while an active part of the ILP that Orwell came to support pacifism, only to later reject it in support of fighting in the Second World War, as the ILP had antimilitarist leanings and was often aligned with or otherwise supported pacifist organizations to

fight against state-sponsored conflict (George Orwell: Into the Twenty-First Century 103). Thus, as Orwell's initiation into politics and socialism was shaped by these opinions and goals, it seems only natural that he would adopt them for himself – even, if those opinions would radically change later on, in both the Spanish Civil War and World War Two. “In the months immediately leading up to the German attack on Poland, Orwell backed the antiwar agitation of the ILP. But once the fighting started he resolved to support ‘My Country Right or Left’, and vitriolically denounced pacifists for expressing opinions that he himself had held just a short time before.” (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 37).

George Orwell's particular “brand” of socialism may not have matched up with what the intellectuals of his age believed it should be; “...as a disgruntled left-wing journalist derisively remarked of Orwell to the young Alfred Kazin in the wartime London of 1944, “*He's not one of us.*”” (Rodden 10, added emphasis). It is also true that he changed his opinions quite a lot, leading to a lot of widespread discussions concerning what they might have been, had he been alive in the twenty-first century. Perhaps it was a result of his upbringing, as a child of Tory England and Bohemian England alike; perhaps it was a result of his experiences abroad and within England, witnessing many different facets of the Empire; perhaps it was something completely else that caused his drastic shifts in opinion. In the end, he was and will continue to be a highly influential author that has reached audiences far and wide even 70 years past his death.

ANALYSIS:

Wells' *The War of the Worlds*:

Out of all of Wells' works of science fiction, there are few that are as famous as *The War of the Worlds*. Published in 1890s when Wells was still in his early 30s, it is amongst the first science fiction novels he wrote and is, alongside *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), likely the novel that he is the most famous for. Originally published as a

serialization between 1895 and 1896, and then later revised to be suitable for book publication in 1898, *The War of the Worlds* brought a new spin to the invasion narrative, which had seen some popularity at the time. More importantly, it was with this novel that Wells fathered an entirely new sub-genre that has now almost become synonymous with science fiction itself: space invasion (Sherborne 125-126). The story has since then seen numerous adaptations, amongst them the infamous radio play by Orson Welles made to sound like a real news broadcast of alien invasion which had some listeners believe it was real, though the amount of people fooled has been reported to be greatly exaggerated (Bracken). But *The War of the Worlds* is so much more than a tale of an alien invasion, and that is what this analysis is going to be diving further into. As a reminder of what was stated in the introduction, we will be working with the following topics: the invasion narrative; the Martians and their imperialist parallels; what kind of role civilians have in a war scenario; and how the genres of science fiction and dystopia apply to the novel.

The Invasion Narrative:

As mentioned previously, *The War of the Worlds* is built around an invasion narrative, but with a twist that had never been seen before at its time of publishing: namely the invaders being creatures from another planet. But what exactly is an invasion narrative? As the name implies, it is a kind of story in which a country finds itself suddenly at war with a foreign power that greatly overpowers it in terms of military strength. As stated by Sherborne, prior to the publication of *The War of the Worlds*, there had been several popular novels depicting England getting invaded by either the French or German armies, meaning that it was a narrative that was in demand amongst the public (Sherborne 126). However, another argument which can be made based on the popularity of it, is that the possibility of an invasion from a foreign power was something that was on people's minds. At its time of publishing, England was still riding the high of the British Empire and considered one of the greatest military powers of the world, but enemies still lurked in the shadows. What Wells

does in *The War of the Worlds* is playing on that fear of the superior enemy waiting to attack by having said enemy be unknown entities from a place nobody expected them to come from: the Martians coming from outer space. “Yet across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us. And early in the twentieth century came the great disillusionment.” (Wells 37). By starting the novel on such an ominous tone, Wells sets the stage for an invasion narrative unlike anything that had been seen before, in which the soldiers of England, and later the world, stand powerless against an inter-planetary foe which they have no defense against. The Martians and their highly advanced weaponry – amongst them heat rays, toxic smoke, and tripod machines that transport them around the landscape – are easily able to eradicate or capture any human they encounter; even warships are no match for them. “They saw the gaunt figures separating and rising out of the water as they retreated shoreward, and one of them raised the camera-like generator of the Heat-Ray. He held it pointing obliquely downward, and a bank of steam sprang from the water at its touch. It must have driven through the iron of the ship’s side like a white-hot iron rod through paper.” (Wells 117). It is important to remember that England, at the time, had one of if not the strongest naval forces in the world. By having the invading Martians decimate one of their strongest war assets, Wells ups the ante and makes the severity of the situation clear to the reader, even now over 100 years later.

An interesting part of the invasion narrative in *The War of the Worlds* is the narrator himself, whom the majority of the book follows, and the way he tells the story. Details about the narrator will be covered in the section about the role of the civilians in the book, but attention needs to be brought to the near documentary-style way the narrator relays the account of what he experienced throughout the invasion, with occasional shifts away from him to instead focus on what his younger brother witnessed, though the narrator is still the same man. By using the first-person narrator,

Wells places the reader right at the heart of the action from start to finish, even though the use of the past tense reveals that these events have long since passed. Despite this, the reader is nonetheless there alongside the narrator when the astronomer Ogilvy, amongst others, initially approach the Martians with a white flag and are promptly incinerated (Wells 51). The reader is there on the steamboat alongside the narrator's brother, trying to flee England, as he watches the Martians fight the warship "Thunder Child" (Wells 115, 117-118). And finally, the reader there with the narrator as he realizes that the Martians have succumbed to Earth's bacteria and viruses (Wells 164). Add in that, as noted by Stanislaw Lem in "H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*" (1990), Wells himself thoroughly researched and visited the area of Woking – the place where the Martians first hit – *The War of the Worlds* would have hit very close to home for its British readers (Lem 18).

There are, however, grounds for critique of the invasion narrative in *The War of the Worlds*. As mentioned, the story is narrated much like a documentary; the narrator speaks of terrifying events and near-death experiences and remains prosaic throughout. And as Ingo Cornils states in "The Martians Are Coming! War, Peace, Love, and Scientific Progress in H.G. Wells's "The War of the Worlds" and Kurd Laßwitz's "Auf zwei Planeten" (2003): "Wells and his narrator appear much more distanced from the events than do Chesney and his narrator, viewing them almost with scientific detachment. Indeed, Wells applied Darwin's evolutionary theory to the threat, pointing out that what the Martians were doing to mankind was no worse than what the colonial powers had done to other, "inferior" races..." (Cornils 27). This style of narration is not necessarily a bad thing. Like Cornils writes, Wells was inspired by another war novel written by George Chesney, which uses a similar narrative style. It allows Wells to paint vivid pictures of the Earth-Mars war and invasion, while also giving him a way to include some of his personal opinions more or less covertly. That said, while the nameless narrator does a brilliant job of telling the story from the point of view of the human civilians, there is an angle that goes unexplored: the Martians

themselves. Throughout the novel there is little to no information as to the reasons behind their invasion, and what is there is based upon the narrator's own observations and speculations. They are instead relegated to voiceless monsters with only conquest in mind. That said, the next topic of the analysis will look into how this supposed flaw in the narrative can also function as a clever parallel to western imperialism.

The Martians and Imperialism:

The Martian invaders in *The War of the Worlds* are, by all means, an enigma throughout the novel. From the day that they crash near the narrator's home in Woking to the evening where he finds them all dead at the hands of the planet's native bacteria, nothing about their motives for invading Earth is ever stated directly. Every bit of information is instead obtained through the observations of the narrator and other civilians – in other words, it is all based on conjecture. Educated guesses, but conjecture nonetheless. Until the end they remain a monstrous threat, unable and unwilling to communicate with their victims. But that does not mean that a lot cannot be gleaned about them from what information is available to the reader; on the contrary, an argument can be made that this was a deliberate move by Wells to create an interesting allegory about imperialism from the perspective of the imperialized people.

It is made clear from the very beginning of the novel in the first chapter, that the arrival of the Martians is as sudden as it is unexpected with very little warning – indeed, if the astronomers had not been studying the planet themselves, who is to say that there'd have been any warning at all before they came crashing down in the hills of Woking? “During the opposition of 1894 a great light was seen on the illuminated part of the disk, first at the Lick Observatory, then by Perrotin of Nice, and then by other observers ... I am inclined to think that this blaze may have been the casting of the huge gun, in the vast pit sunk into their planet, from which their shots were fired at us.” (Wells 39). As the narrator states, several more lights or explosions are seen since the first, but the

astronomers brush them all off as nothing more than natural phenomenon such as impacting meteorites or volcanic eruptions. “The chances against anything manlike on Mars are a million to one,’ he said.” (Wells 40). “He” refers to the astronomer Ogilvy, who is amongst the first casualties of the invasion, approaching the Martians with a white flag in an attempt to communicate, but no such attempt at communication ever happens again as the invaders set upon their path of destruction. It is the swift and merciless killings of peaceful civilians within the first five chapters that sets the tone of the rest of the novel, but also where we can identify the beginnings of the imperialist parallels between the Martians and the empires that Wells was a part of. Even the narrator displays a shred of – possibly past – imperialist thinking when he speaks of how the humans viewed Mars prior to the invasion: “At most terrestrial men fancied there might be other men upon Mars, perhaps inferior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise.” (Wells 37). Nevertheless, the narrator is not the voice of the empire; he instead becomes the voice of the imperialized, as he navigates a suddenly hostile world, supported by how he likens the actions of the Martians to what humans have done many times themselves, all in the name of empire:

...before we judge of them too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit? (Wells 38)

Thus it is made clear from very early on that the Martians are to be viewed much like the European empires in their quest for new land and resources, and the humans are no better than the animals and indigenous people that were subjugated in the process – viewed as inferior or nothing more than

a source of sustenance, as the narrator realizes much later on (Wells 131). Or as Andrew Frayn points out in the introduction to the edition of *The War of the Worlds* that this thesis is based on, Wells invites his readers, and especially his contemporary Victorians, to "...imagine being a subject race." (Frayn 18).

This hypothesis is supported by the fact that Wells was firmly against imperialism throughout his life, especially in his later years. But though *The War of the Worlds* is amongst his earliest works, the novel still represents some of his thoughts on the British Empire and what goes into building an empire, even before his proposed world state and cosmopolitanism. Take for example the Martians' technological superiority over the Earthlings, and how it is comparable to the British Empire and its endeavor to obtain colonies.

His Martians are imperialists, using their superior technology to invade a nation (England) which had been accumulating its own Empire throughout the century largely because of a superior technological sophistication. In other words, the arrival of the Martians and their mechanised brutalities are the symbolic forms Wells chose to explore a deeper set of concerns about the violence of Empire building, and about the anxieties of otherness and the encounter with otherness that Empire imposes on the Imperial peoples. (Roberts 68).

With all of this in mind, it makes sense for the novel to focus solely on the human victims and leaving the reader in the dark about the Martians' motivations and reasons for partaking in this conquest. After all, when the Europeans arrived in the Americas, Africa and the East, they would at first have been these strange, foreign creatures armed with unknown technology and no language that the natives would be able to understand, set on claiming the land for their own. And if, as the narrator theorizes, the Martians "...may be descended from beings not unlike ourselves, by a gradual development of brain and hands (the latter giving rise to the two bunches of delicate tentacles at last) at the expense of the rest of the body." (Wells 133), who is to say whether or not

they would have shared humanity's thoughts and beliefs on what does and does not make a lesser being? Could these beliefs have been amplified by the evolution into essentially walking brains, leaving them with no emotional capacity aside from a selfish need to survive, following the loss of their bodies? (Wells 133). These speculations are once again supported through the novel, when the narrator quotes Wells himself on the matter of further human evolution and technological advancement, as Sherborne also comments on (Sherborne 127). Furthermore, what the narrator says about the Martians' emotional capacity also aligns with Huxley's theories on human behavior, particularly the concept "sympathy", which Wells appears to be exploring in *The War of the Worlds* as well (Sherborne 126).

As a final note, there is yet another part of the Martian invasion that is reminiscent of the European empires; the "red weed" that the Martians bring with them, the small bit of their native vegetation. A plant which the narrator describes as being "...of a vivid blood-red tint..." and featuring "...cactus-like branches...", as well as being extremely fast-growing (Wells 133). Sherborne uses the terms "gardeners" and "pests" to describe the relationship between the Martians and humans. If we go back to the observation that they are treating the humanity like Europeans have treated indigenous people, this comparison is fitting. After all, when European colonists arrived someplace new, such as Tasmania, they brought with them their own native flora and fauna and did away with what was already there, just like what the Martians do (Sherborne 127). Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, depending on which perspective you want to focus on, for all their devastating powers the invading force is relatively quickly defeated by Earth's bacteria, and thus we are never made privy to what their further plans would have been.

And scattered about it, some in their overturned war-machines, some in the now rigid handling-machines, and a dozen of them stark and silent and laid in a row, were the Martians – *dead!* – slain by the putrefactive and disease bacteria against which their systems were unprepared;

slain as the red weed was being slain; slain, after all man's devices had failed, by the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth. (Wells 164).

Thus ends the Martian empire, as quickly as it had begun, but as the narrator comments there are still lasting effects upon the world, even years later. Roberts calls them "...subtle and allusive..." (Roberts 69), as the narrator never outright states these changes, merely mention them in passing and, also highlighted by Roberts as hitting differently upon reaching the end of the book, this quote from chapter 2: "I was at home at that hour and writing in my study; and although my French windows face towards Ottershaw and the blind was up (for I loved in those days to look up at the night sky), I saw nothing of it." (Wells 42). What Roberts focuses on is the phrase "in those days"; it is significant in what it implies about past and present for the narrator. "...those days are long past: the night sky now a venue of fear instead of wonder." (Roberts 70). There are other small comments about the remains of the Martian invasion, but it is perhaps these hints of lasting emotional scars and acute awareness that "we are not alone in the universe" that hit the hardest. And perhaps that is the strongest parallel to the European empires and colonies, intentional or not; the aftershocks once they have fallen, and the wounds they have left upon the colonized people.

Civilians in War:

Let us now move on to the role that the civilians have in the novel, as well as the kind of impact they have on the narrative and each other as characters living through the same event. As *The War of the Worlds* is written from the perspective of civilians, it is natural that the focus is on them as bystanders and victims, and not on the efforts of the British army. Because instead of being a grand tale of brave soldiers against an unrelenting and near impossible to defeat enemy, the novel instead shows the reader the many ways the civilians react, be it with fear and aggression, compassion, or ignorance and hubris in the face of imminent destruction.

The main character whom, as mentioned in the section about the invasion narrative, is also the narrator, is an unnamed man who lives with his wife somewhere in the area near Woking (Wells 42). Not much is ever really described about him, but he confirms on page 58 that he is a writer of philosophy, thus he has some form of higher education. "...for in those days even philosophical writers had many little luxuries..." (Wells 58). It is also hinted that he has some sort of friendship or otherwise friendly relation with the astronomer Ogilvy, joining him and other astronomers in studying Mars shortly before the invasion, and grieving his death at the hands of the Martians (Wells 40, 57). He can thus, by all means, be classified as an ordinary, Victorian man of a decent social standing. Same can be said about his younger brother, a medical student in London, whom the story shifts to in chapters 14, 16, and 17. It is through these two characters and what they experience that the reader observes not just the actions of the Martians, but how the rest of the people around them react to the war. There are, of course, many different ways for people to react in a crisis situation, but in *The War of the Worlds* they can roughly be categorized into two general groups: the people who help others, and the people who only help themselves.

In the group of people who help others amidst the chaos, we find the narrator's younger brother who, while fleeing London, saves two women from being robbed of their horse and carriage. "He heard their screams, and, hurrying round the corner, saw a couple of men struggling to drag them out of the little pony-chaise in which they had been driving, while a third with difficulty held the frightened pony's head." (Wells 103). The two women – known only as Mrs. Elphinstone and her younger sister – end up becoming the younger brother's travelling companions, and throughout their journey towards the sea and thus a chance to flee to mainland Europe via ship (Wells 105). Obviously not the only ones to have this idea, the trio encounter several other people caught up in the chaos, at one point helping a lost and exhausted child as well.

...and then a little girl of eight or nine, all alone, threw herself under the hedge close by my brother, weeping ... My brother woke from his torpor of astonishment and lifted her up, speaking gently to her, and carried her to Miss Elphinstone. So soon as my brother touched her she became quite still, as if frightened. "Ellen!" shrieked a woman in the crowd, with tears in her voice – "Ellen!" And the child suddenly darted away from my brother, crying "Mother!" (Wells 109).

The narrator's younger brother is an example of a civilian who, despite the chaos and panic all around them, stops to assist his fellow fugitives, while everything around him is falling apart. Be it the women who were nearly robbed, the child at risk of being trampled, or the man who was run over by a horse (Wells 110), he is someone who reaches out and does what is morally right. He stands in contrast to the people who, either blinded by fear and desires to escape the Martians, only seek to help themselves. This group of people appears to be the vast majority of the civilians encountered in the novel, but notable examples are the men who attempted to rob Mrs. Elphinstone and her sister, or what happens within the mob of people all making their way north all in the hope of reaching safety. "Edgware had been a scene of confusion, Chalk Farm a riotous tumult, but this was a whole population in movement. ... The figures poured out past the corner, and receded with their backs to the group in the lane. Along the margin came those who were on foot threatened by the wheels, stumbling in the ditches, blundering into one another." (Wells 107). In this crowd it is every man for himself with no room for compassion for the fellow people, and the narrator's brother is trampled or otherwise injured several times as he tries to traverse the pandemonium. Knowing that Wells introduced aspects of Huxley's theories on "sympathy" as a part of how we act as humans, compared to the seemingly single-minded selfishness of the Martians, it seems plausible that this clash between the fugitives who help each other and the ones who do not is also an attempt to bring in not just Huxley, but also Charles Darwin. "...from a Darwinian perspective our sense of

good and evil is not underwritten by divine authority, but is merely an accidental by-product of other developments, and therefore ... it is inconsistent, is at war with our other instincts and is variable from culture to culture.” (Sherborne 126-127). To put it a little differently: in that crowd that the narrator’s brother and his companions find themselves trying to navigate, is each individual caught up in it not acting on pure instinct in order to ensure their own chance at survival? “Make way, make way,” or some iteration thereof is shouted repeatedly (Wells 108-110). Is that not Darwin’s “survival of the fittest” in its most basic form?

Aside from these two general types of civilians in the war, there is a third group that while not quite as relevant to this analysis as the first two, should not go unmentioned. This group can tentatively be classified as the people who do nothing – that is, they either observe the war situation and fall into blind despair, or they ignore the threat of the Martians completely in favor of a few hours of merriment and cavorting. The first part of this group is primarily represented by the curate, whom the narrator ends up sheltering with for the majority of the invasion. This man serves as a continuous source of annoyance – and later hatred – for the narrator, as he is either constantly crying or calling out to God in despair, resulting in the narrator going as far as attempting to hide from him at certain points: “I grew very weary and irritable with the curate’s perpetual ejaculations; I tired of the sight of his selfish despair. After some ineffectual remonstrance I kept away from him ... When he followed me thither, I went to a box room at the top of the house and, in order to be alone with my aching miseries, locked myself in.” (Wells 123). Knowing Wells’ disdain for religion and that he considered himself an atheist (Sherborne 46), it is likely that the curate is a tool or an outlet for Wells to voice some of his opinions on the worth of religion in a situation of disaster and the futility of looking to a god whenever a disaster occurs. Based on Roberts’ comments about the curate, that his “...narrative of the invasion (that the Martians are agents of God’s judgement against a sinful world) is shown to be inadequate to events.” (Roberts 70), it seems likely that

Wells, as a man who believed firmly in science, would use the curate for such a purpose. On the other hand, the second part of this group – the ones who ignore the Martians and go on as usual – are best represented through the short story that the narrator hears from the artilleryman, whom he first met near the beginning of the invasion and later comes upon once again towards the end of it.

'One night last week,' he said, 'some fools got the electric light in order, and there was all Regent Street and the Circus ablaze, crowded with painted and ragged drunkards, men and women, dancing and shouting till dawn. A man who was there told me. And as the day came they became aware of a fighting-machine standing near by the Langham and looking down at them. Heaven knows how long he had been there. It must have given some of them a nasty turn. He came down the road towards them, and picked up nearly a hundred too drunk or frightened to run away.' (Wells 158).

While there is not much to say about this group, what is interesting is that this unintentionally predicts the necessity of creating blackouts in especially the Second World War. Had these people not chosen to turn on the lights and ignoring the invasion in favor of a single night of drinking and celebration, they would have likely survived. Instead this act of hubris and ignorance becomes their downfall, serving as a warning for the novel's readers.

Applying the Genres:

Finally, let us examine how the genres of science fiction and dystopia apply to *The War of the Worlds*. If we try to look at the novel as a work of dystopia, it does not truly fit the genre. The invasion and war against the Martians is certainly dystopic in nature, but aside from depicting the horrors of a supernatural enemy invading, it does not suit what we generally consider a dystopia. That is not to say that there is no representation of dystopia in the novel, however. The artilleryman

presents the narrator with an imagined scenario for the future that is dystopic in nature, in which he envisions a part of humanity enslaved as livestock or pets for the Martians.

‘...All these – the sort of people that lived in these houses, and all those damn little clerks that used to live down that way – they’d be no good. ... Well, the Martians will just be a godsend to these. Nice roomy cages, fattening food, careful breeding, no worry. After a week or so chasing about the fields and lands on empty stomachs, they’ll come and be caught cheerful. They’ll be quite glad after a bit. They’ll wonder what people did before there were Martians to take care of them. ...’ (Wells 154).

Furthermore, as a contrast to this group of people, the artilleryman tells the narrator of his dream of setting up a new society underground in the sewers of London, where the remaining humans shall live and once again attempt to flourish. “‘What have we to do? We have to invent a sort of life where men can live and breed, and be sufficiently secure to bring the children up. ... You see, how I mean to live is underground. I’ve been thinking about the drains. ... And we form a band – able-bodied, clean-minded men. We’re not going to pick up any rubbish that drifts in. Weaklings go out again.’” (Wells 155-156). This hypothetical future society split between humanity as cattle and creatures hiding underground, with an eventual hope for those hiding to eventually regain control, is much closer to our contemporary understanding of the concept than the invasion narrative. And as Lisboa comments: “It is to be reasonably expected that dystopias should depend upon the destruction of whatever/whoever was in place beforehand.” (Lisboa 146). What the artilleryman imagines is certainly dystopia, but as the narrator comes to realize, this dream of life underground is little more than hot air and empty promises, by a man who lacks the discipline to see it through (Wells 160).

If we instead look at *The War of the Worlds* in the context of science fiction as a genre, there is very little doubt that this is indeed a work of science fiction. While a novel with a similar scenario

was published that same year – Kurd Laßwitz’s *Auf zwei Planeten* (Cornils 24) – *The War of the Worlds* is most often credited as the birth of the sub-genre of alien invasion. But with the alien invasion, Wells also introduces a majority of other speculations related to what he thought the future would be like and, quite accurately, predicts elements of the kinds of weapons that we have come to know from the wars of the twentieth century and up until now.

...the alien’s heat-ray anticipates laser technology; the lethal ‘black smoke’ they use looks forward to the use of mustard gas in World War I; and most remarkable of all Wells looks forward to that distinctively modern iteration of war as less soldiers on a battlefield and more massed tides of civilian refugees—noncombatants terrorised and massacred, living under bombardment and gas attack. (Roberts 69).

All of these, with the exception of the heat-ray which is of a destructive level that we have yet to reach, we have seen examples of in modern wars – and all while Wells was still alive. Civilian refugees, in particular, continue to be a staple of war, especially in the twenty-first century. We saw it when the Jews fled the Nazis in World War Two, we see it now when migrants and refugees from Africa or the Middle East come rushing to Europe through any means they can, in hopes of finding shelter from war, persecution, climate changes and many other such disasters (The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations). Furthermore, in regards to the importance of technology in wars, “Wells was convinced that the ability to build and control machines would be the decisive factor in future conflicts.” (Cornils 27) which has been proven true several times. The threat of other hostile nations building more and stronger weapons is a constant threat, even in our day and age. We can argue that this is why Wells’ science fiction is as successful as it; because while his speculations into alien technology and the kind of impact it has upon the humans in *The War of the Worlds* are just that – speculations – they are nonetheless scenarios that we as readers can relate to more than one hundred years after the novel’s first publication.

Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four:

When you hear the phrase “Big Brother is watching you”, odds are that you immediately visualize a variation of the same image: an imposing figure of authority looking down at you from a poster or a big screen. It is also likely that the phrase will make you think of a state of mass surveillance and terms such as “Orwellian”, “police state” and “totalitarianism” as well. All of these different images, terms and phrases are commonly associated with one another thanks to George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Often considered his greatest and most influential work, it is also his last and was published just a year prior to his death in 1950. The novel deals with topics such as surveillance and complete control of the general public, the erasure and rewriting of past history, and life as a citizen under a totalitarian government. Because of it, we even speak of terms such as “Orwellian” – often used as a warning of political systems that resemble that of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Cambridge Dictionary) – and “Big Brother”, which refers to any kind of governmental authority that has total power and tries to limit and control the freedom, thoughts and actions of its people (Cambridge Dictionary). As a reminder once again, in this analysis we will be examining: the nature of Oceania, Ingsoc, and how the government controls its people; the mass surveillance and the police state shown in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; and what kind of an impact science fiction and dystopia have on the novel’s narrative.

Oceania, Ingsoc, and Control:

Nineteen Eighty-Four is, perhaps first and foremost, a story about control. More specifically, it is a story about how a government can keep its people in absolute control through fear, scarcity, and a fabricated loyalty built on deceit hidden behind promises of only wanting the best for the nation. But it is also a tale of politics and corruption, hidden agendas and, perhaps most importantly, obtaining absolute power. This part of the analysis aims to look into the interplay between the

nation of Oceania, the political party Ingsoc, and the control and power that this party constantly craves.

The setting of the novel is the country of Oceania – one out of three super-states that have divided the world between them following a grand war.

Eurasia comprises the whole of the northern part of the European and Asiatic land-mass, from Portugal to the Bering Strait. Oceania comprises the Americas, the Atlantic islands including the British Isles, Australasia, and the southern portion of Africa. Eastasia, smaller than the others and with a less definite western frontier, comprises China and the countries to the south of it, the Japanese islands and a large but fluctuating portion of Manchuria, Mongolia, and Tibet. (Orwell 215)

That this future world is split into three zones is no coincidence. At the time of publishing the novel, the world was still recovering from World War Two, and as he wrote to his publisher about the purpose of the novel: “What it is really meant to do is to discuss the implications of dividing the world up into ‘Zones of influence’ (I thought of it in 1944 as a result of the Tehran Conference), and in addition by parodying them the intellectual implications of totalitarianism.” (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 147). In other words, he deliberately wanted his readers to think of how Europe was divided into different zones governed by the victors following the defeat of Nazi Germany, in order to spark a debate about what such a division means.

As is made abundantly clear from the beginning of the novel, life in Oceania is bleak. Following the main character, Winston Smith, the reader is given descriptions of a dreary environment focusing heavily on how cold, dirty and grey everything is, accompanied by the ever present gaze of Big Brother. “Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the

posters that were plastered everywhere. The blackmoustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner.” (Orwell 4). Shortly after establishing the state of the city and apartment around Winston, the reader is given a name to the specific location: London, located in what was once called England, but is now known as Airstrip One (Orwell 5). This sense of hopelessness and decay of the environment is something that is present in nearly all locations of the novel. From Winston's barely livable apartment building, to his workplace at the Ministry of Truth, to the streets of London – it is all dark, crumbling and falling apart in some way, but with a few important exceptions. The first one is the room above the junk-shop, first introduced on page 110, where Winston will later meet with his lover Julia; the second is the clearing in countryside where he and Julia begin their affair on page 137; third, presented on page 194, is O'Brien's apartment who as a member of the Inner Party has access to all the luxuries that Winston and Julia's Outer Party middle class does not ; finally the last are the prison and interrogation facilities under the Ministry of Love, with their sterile cleanliness, which all but the sixth chapter of part 3 take place in. But as will be elaborated on in the section on mass surveillance and the police state, while these spaces are not subjected to the same sense of decay as every other location, they are by no means safe or free of Ingsoc's eyes.

Ingsoc, or “English Socialism” as it would be in what is known as “Oldspeak” in the novel (Orwell 42), is the singular party that rules Oceania. Seen from a broad perspective, this party is the general antagonist of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; everything bad that happens or has ever happened in the novel has, in some shape or form, been because of Ingsoc – the Inner Party in particular. This political party, as has been commented on by the likes of Thomas Cushman and many others, is modeled not only on the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, but also draws inspiration from the capitalist society he himself was a part of. “...Orwell provides a model for unpacking the perils not only of Soviet-style totalitarianism, which appears in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

as Ingsoc, but also of the destructive juggernaut of capitalist modernity, or what might be called Capsoc.” (George Orwell: *Into the Twenty-First Century* 17). And just as quickly as the reader understands the conditions of the people of Oceania, they come to understand the chokehold that the government has upon its people, the supposed middle class of the Outer Party in particular. Every aspect of their lives is controlled and regulated with an unrelenting rigidity, be it work, rest, family or even their emotions. It is most clearly outlined in the book by Emmanuel Goldstein’s that Winston is reading moments before his imprisonment.

A Party member is required to have not only the right opinions, but the right instincts. ... is expected to have no private emotions and no respites from enthusiasm. He is supposed to live in a continuous frenzy of hatred of foreign enemies and internal traitors, triumph over victories, and self-abasement before the power and wisdom of the Party. The discontents produced by his bare, unsatisfying life are deliberately turned outwards and dissipated by such devices as the Two Minutes Hate, and the speculations which might possibly induce a sceptical or rebellious attitude are killed in advance by his early-acquired inner discipline. (Orwell 241).

As can be seen here, there is no individualism in Oceania. Members of the Party are not allowed to think or feel for themselves, because to do so would be to go against the Party. Even if a citizen is innocent, but there is a chance they might commit a crime against the nation, they are dealt with mercilessly. Not included in the quote is the control of Party members’ leisure time, as well as the insidious nature of the control that Ingsoc has on the family structure of Oceania. In regards to the leisure time of the people, it is stated in part 1 chapter 8, that there is no such thing as time alone in Oceania when you are a member of the Party. “In principle a Party member had no spare time, and was never alone except in bed. ... to do anything that suggested a taste for solitude, even to go for a walk by yourself, was always slightly dangerous.” (Orwell 94). If you can never truly be alone, always expected to be engaging with the community, there is very little chance for a person to truly

know themselves as an individual. As Clarke comments: “The eradication of traditional communities is combined with an emphasis upon collective activity administered by the Party itself. ... The implicit object is to control to the contexts within which individuality is formed and validated.” (Clarke 157). In addition, when it comes to the family structure, Ingsoc has all but eliminated all forms of love and affection within it by ensuring that all marriages happen between couples who have no physical attraction towards one another. Furthermore, they aspire to remove all pleasure from sexual relations by turning it into something dirty and shameful that one has to go through to put more children into the world; a “duty to the party” as Winston’s wife would tell him prior to their separation. Or as Winston thinks to himself “...a slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema.” (Orwell 75-76). Regarding the children themselves, should any be conceived, they are indoctrinated into the ways of the Party through organizations such as the scout-like Spies and the Youth League, learning to spy on their parents for the Thought Police and actively being rewarded for such actions (Orwell 29). All of these things come together – the lack of loyalty to anything and anyone that is not the Party, the lack of spare time and solitude, the lack of love, the lack of resources, and so much more – is how Ingsoc controls its people, and it is how it remains in power, which is ultimately their goal, as O’Brien tells Winston while he is locked up in the Ministry of Love. ““Now I will tell you the answer to my question. It is this. The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power. ...”” (Orwell 301-302). And that is, in the simplest form of putting it, all there is to it. Everything that happens in Oceania, be it to its people or its enemies, happens for the sake of Ingsoc obtaining power through control, and keeping that power just for the sake of having it.

Mass Surveillance and the Police State:

Moving on, now that Ingsoc's relationship with control and power in relation to the nation has been examined, the question is: how do they uphold that control? The answer to this is through the mass surveillance of the population, as well as by virtue of Oceania being a police state. These two factors of life in Oceania is what permits Ingsoc to keep their citizens under such strict control. But what is a police state? Per definition, it is much like a dictatorship or a totalitarian state, and as has been proven by real life totalitarian governments such as the Soviet Union, they often accompany each other. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as "a political unit characterized by repressive governmental control of political, economic, and social life usually by an arbitrary exercise of power by police and especially secret police in place of regular operation of administrative and judicial organs of the government according to publicly known legal procedures." (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Oceania is, as mentioned in previous sections, indeed in possession of a secret police commonly known as the Thought Police. The duty of the Thought Police is, essentially, to act as Big Brother's eyes and ears. Because while "Big Brother is watching you" may be posted all over London – and presumably every other city in Oceania – he is nothing more than a figurehead, a symbol of the government and the totalitarian state, as is eventually revealed (Orwell 296). The ones that the citizens should truly concern themselves with, and by far the biggest threat to Winston, are the ones hiding in the shadows and on the other side of the telescreens, and every member of the Party knows it. Even the police flying by in helicopters, spying through peoples' windows, is reduced to nothing more than a daily event compared to the threat that the Thought Police poses. "Only the Thought Police mattered." (Orwell 4).

It is through the this secret police that Ingsoc enacts mass surveillance upon its people, and it is something that Winston is aware of from the beginning of the book up until the final chapter, even after having succumbed to the brainwashing in the Ministry of Love and, as Lisboa argues, learning

to love his nemesis sincerely (Lisboa 142). No matter what is happening in the narrative, even when he is in a seemingly safe space, there is always a constant knowledge in the background that nothing can be trusted. The clearing that Julia guides him to when their affair first begins is only safe because no microphones can be hidden in the surrounding trees (Orwell 137); the room above the junk shop that the affair and quiet rebellion of Winston and Julia happens in is a trap set up by the Thought Police (Orwell 252); and O'Brien's apartment was never safe, because O'Brien himself is an agent of the Thought Police (Orwell 273). Not even Winston's own apartment is safe, because the telescreens found everywhere record both images and sounds, and every home is required to have them (Orwell 5). Even then, had those spaces been safe, it would not have mattered because the entire time the Thought Police has been watching him. Such is the extent of the surveillance that the Thought Police, and thus the government, are willing to subject their people to. "He knew now that for seven years the Thought Police had watched him like a beetle under a magnifying glass. There was no physical act, no word spoken aloud, that they had not noticed, no train of thought that they had not been able to infer." (Orwell 317).

Additionally, as mentioned in the section analysis Ingsoc's relationship with control and power, it is not just the Thought Police that the people have to look out for, either. Through early indoctrination, young children are educated on how to spy on other people – their parents in particular – and reporting them to the authorities. An example of this indoctrination is showed through the children of Winston's neighbor and co-worker Mr. Parsons; as the narrator comments, following Winston's observation that their mother must live a life being scared of her children, to the children the indoctrination is all a game for them. With the banners, songs and training in the use of weapons and spying on people hidden as toys, they learn to adore the Party and Big Brother like good citizens should (Orwell 29). Furthermore, knowing that Orwell drew inspiration for Oceania from Nazi Germany, it is likely no coincidence that these children's organizations are

reminiscent of Hitler Youth, training the children to be loyal to the party and only the party. The result of this indoctrination is made explicitly clear when Winston encounters Mr. Parsons while in the initial holding cells in the Ministry of Love. “‘It was my little daughter,’ said Parsons with a sort of doleful pride. ‘She listened at the keyhole. Heard what I was saying, and nipped off to the patrols the very next day. Pretty smart for a nipper of seven, eh? I don’t bear her any grudge for it. In fact I’m proud of her. It shows I brought her up in the right spirit, anyway.’” (Orwell 268). Just like that, Mr. Parsons’ own daughter – a child just seven years old – has willingly made herself a tool of the Thought Police, a living camera and microphone willingly turning her father into the secret police. And Mr. Parsons, himself a successful product of that indoctrination from his own childhood, feels no resentment and is instead proud of her. That is how deeply the loyalty to this police state and the government runs, and how far Ingsoc’s mass surveillance reaches. There is no privacy, there is no loyalty except to the party. Thus, as with everything else in Oceania related to the government, it all comes down to a matter of power and control.

The Impact of Science Fiction and Dystopia:

Since *Nineteen Eighty-Four* focuses so heavily on themes of control, power, and the loss of individuality under totalitarian police states, what kind of an impact do the genres of science fiction and dystopia have on the narrative?

In terms of science fiction as a genre impacting the novel it might be prudent to say that, because *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is set in a future that was only thirty-five years away at the time of publishing, the kind of science fiction found within it is based on the developments Orwell believed were possible in that time-frame. In fairness, compared to the grand, technological leaps of Wells’ *Martians*, what is seen in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is fairly simplistic, but only all the more frightening for what they represent. Especially when one considers that not only do the telescreens and speakwrites make sense from the developmental standpoint of the post-war world, we can find

similarities between Orwell's technological speculations and contemporary computer and television technology. Instead the science fiction elements are more clearly found in the society and environment of Oceania; the idea that Great Britain or America could ever end up as societies frighteningly similar to the Stalinist Soviet Union or Nazi Germany would have been near unimaginable to a lot of readers at the time. Yet it is exactly what happened following yet another devastating war, in which the novel confirms an atom bomb landed on Colchester, while Winston himself was just a child that had, up until then, been living in peace-times (Orwell 38). This memory of the atom bomb is also accompanied by a man's despaired wailing, as if calling out a warning to the reader: "'We didn't ought to 'ave trusted 'em. I said so, Ma, didn't I? That's what comes of trusting 'em. I said so all along. We didn't ought to 'ave trusted the buggers.'" (Orwell 39). However, Winston does not recall who said "buggers" are, and so the reader will never know – be they fascist, communists, capitalists or something else. It is in these subtle cues and speculations for the future that we can identify the science fiction of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; elements and events that are at once foreign and familiar. But if we once again consider the time of its first publishing, the scenarios found in the novel would exactly have been familiar to the readers, following the years of World War Two with its bombings and constant scarcity of wares.

In comparison to the subtlety of the science fiction genre in the novel, it is much easier to identify the dystopia. As a whole, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is hailed as one of the most influential works of dystopia of its age, which makes it all the more hard-hitting to realize that Oceania shares a lot of its basic traits with the utopia, but with caveats attached. All of the people of Oceania who are in the Party have homes, jobs, and basic income – but only the Inner Party have access to homes that are comfortable and suited for living, and they are in positions that pay much better than what the people of the Outer Party have. All Party members have access to a wide variety of activities with which they can spend their leisure time or help out the community – but such activities are

expected of the Party members, and there is no longer such a thing as being alone or individualism. All children receive a mandatory education and participate in activities and organizations aimed at them – but the education and activities all aim to indoctrinate them further into the worship and support of the totalitarian regime. Considering what we know about the dystopia, this is the entire point: to the Inner Party life is good and full of riches, while the Outer Party suffers under the oppressive government completely unaware – and if they do become aware of the unfairness or otherwise fail to conform, they are dealt with and forced back into that conformity. That said, like anything else in the novel, it is no coincidence that Orwell walks this fine line between utopia and dystopia; as Robert Paul Resch argues in “Utopia, Dystopia, and the Middle Class in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*” (1997), “...Orwell attempts to incorporate the utopian and dystopian elements of his political ideology within an evolutionary, historical perspective.” (Resch 153). The reason why he does this, is because *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not just a work of science fiction or dystopia – it is also a political satire. This is an aspect of the novel that will be further elaborated on in the discussion, however, to which we will now proceed.

DISCUSSION:

We have now finally reached the discussion section of the thesis. To offer a brief recap before proceeding: the section on theory looked into dystopia and science fiction as genres, and the youth and political developments of H. G. Wells’ and George Orwell, while the analyses of Wells’ *The War of the Worlds* and Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* each went into detail about a set of relevant topics for the respective novels. In this section we will be discussing the following: how Wells’ and Orwell’s political leanings have had an impact on their fiction, based on the results of the analyses; why the genres of the novel matter as well as any other potential genres that apply; and how and why Wells and Orwell have had such a great impact on not just the world of fiction, but also politics and society with their influence still being noticeable today.

Politics and Fiction:

Considering the fact that both Wells and Orwell were avid scholars and if not politicians directly, then academics who desired to make their opinions known to their communities, it is no surprise that their political leanings have made their way into the fiction they wrote. As can be read in the theory section, both authors found themselves agreeing with the socialist movement of the time and, for the most part, considered themselves socialists. But neither Wells nor Orwell, for all that they were sympathetic towards socialism and largely agreed with the ideology, truly fit in. To reiterate what was said about Orwell in 1944 in London during the war: “He’s not one of us.” (Rodden 10). In the same regard neither was Wells – not truly. He might have joined the Fabian Society in 1903, but he came to develop his own niche socialistic ideology. The purpose here is not to discuss the reasons why they did or did not fit into the socialistic ideology, however; it is to address how those unique ideas on politics impacted their forays into the worlds of fiction.

Something that stands out in *The War of the Worlds* is a part of what the artilleryman tells the narrator about his plans for an underground society beneath London.

‘...You begin to see? And we form a band—able-bodied, clean-minded men. We’re not going to pick up any rubbish that drifts in. Weaklings go out again. ... Those who stop obey orders. Able-bodied, clean-minded women we want also – mothers and teachers. No lackadaisical ladies – no blasted rolling eyes. We can’t have any weak or silly. Life is real again, and the useless and cumbersome and mischievous have to die. They ought to die. They ought to be willing to die. It’s a sort of disloyalty, after all, to live and taint the race. And they can’t be happy. Moreover, dying’s none so dreadful; it’s thefunking makes it bad. ...’ (Wells 156)

This paragraph stands out, as *The War of the Worlds* predates a lot of his political non-fiction; in particular, it predates *Anticipations*. As mentioned by Sherborne and Partington, it was with *Anticipations* that Wells committed one of his most damaging acts to his reputation. “Nothing has

done more damage to Wells's reputation than the concluding chapter of *Anticipations*. Much of it sounds like an ill-advised collaboration between the Artilleryman from *The War of the Worlds* and Mr Kurtz from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*." (Sherborne 148-149). This shows that Wells already, before he truly found his place as an author of political non-fiction and an important voice for the socialism in England, was of a belief that eugenics were a viable and useful strategy as a part of society, here shown through the artilleryman's dream of an underground utopia. It would not be until the publication of *Anticipations* and the critiques that followed that Wells started to rescind his ideas on the practice. Can it be argued that Wells' should be excused for having this mindset in his younger years? Was he not merely a man of his era, where such practices were still accepted? Perhaps; he was, despite everything, still fairly new as an author. But as a self-proclaimed follower of Huxley, the mindset shown in both *The War of the Worlds* through the artilleryman and later on in *Anticipations* is, as Partington comments, completely devoid of the "ethical" part of Huxley's "ethical evolution" (Partington 51). By all means, Wells should have known better after having been directly taught by Huxley. However, Sherborne offers a perspective on Wells' – as Roberts puts it – "flirtations" with eugenics (Roberts vii), regarding *Anticipations* but likely also applicable for what the artilleryman says.

This is not a rational extrapolation from existing knowledge. It is not even the speculation of a fearless thinker. It is the fantasy of a sickly, squeaky-voiced individual who would have been rejected if he had tried to enlist, a Victorian schoolboy who had read adventure stories which made him afraid of savage natives and who felt threatened by the rough lads from the National School – though, to be fair to Wells, these seem to have been attitudes widely held among the educated classes, many readers greeting his concluding chapter with particular enthusiasm. (Sherborne 149).

It is food for thought that Wells' fascination with eugenics, perhaps deep down, could be the revenge- or power fantasy of a man who grew up taking his fair share of beatings; from other boys as well as his own frail health. A world devoid of the people he feared, be they schoolmates, students or foreigners, in which only the strong or useful would live. Of course, had the artilleryman's dream actually had any feasible way of becoming a reality in *The War of the Worlds*, it is just as likely that Wells himself would have been turned away at the door and chased off for being a weak person, as it is that he would have been welcomed with open arms for his academic ability.

Orwell, on the other hand, has a lot to say about politics in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and a vast majority happens through its "forgotten" genre as satire. Because the genres will be discussed later on, we will leave that be for the moment; however, that does not mean that a lot of Orwell's political musings cannot be found outside of the satire, however. As has been previously stated, Orwell was a man of contradictions and paradoxes regarding his political leanings – hence the label "not one of us". This has led to a lot of different interpretations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which, Bernard Crick argues in the last chapter of *The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell*, is a folly and to misread the novel.

It has been read as deterministic prophecy, as a kind of science fiction or a dystopia, as a conditional projection of the future, as a humanistic satire on contemporary events, as a total rejection of socialism of any kind, and as a libertarian socialist – almost an anarchist – protest against totalitarian tendencies and abuses of power both in his own and in other possible societies. Most bad or partial readings occur through not grasping the context of the time – the immediate postwar period. (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 146)

As stated in the quote, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* needs to be read from the point of view of an Englishman that had just seen the end of another World War that had begun less than thirty years

after the first one ended. It may have been with victory to the allied forces, but with a lot of casualties and parts of life that would have had to be reintegrated once again. Add to this that Orwell, ever a paradox, had an ability to see the positive as well as the negative in both the Left and the Right sides of politics.

Not for nothing did Orwell, the social democrat, label the progenitor of Big Brother “Ingsoc” (*English Socialism*), not Stalinism. Yet neither did he doubt that the corporate capitalist state and its ministries of information could pose *Nineteen Eighty-Four*-ish dangers. ... Another way of characterizing his political balance might be to say that just as a healthy person walks on both a left foot and a right one, a society needs both a left foot of social equality and social provision ... and a right foot of personal liberty through responsibility... (George Orwell: *Into the Twenty-First Century* 164, original emphasis).

This claim by Jim Sleeper in *George Orwell: Into the Twenty-First Century* holds a lot of merit, as Oceania is somehow both capitalistic and socialistic in nature, if twisted and extreme versions of them. Twice a black market is mentioned, and amongst the working class of Oceania – the Proles – can be found somewhat of a free market with independent shops and bars, though Party Members are not permitted as such to spend their money in them (Orwell 8). Yet there are also traits of Oceania that are strongly reminiscent of not just communistic regimes, but also of war-time England with all goods being rationed and in scarcity. Even more so, Rose argues that the totalitarianism in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is modeled not just after the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany, but also England during World War One.

On 8 August 1914 the government was empowered to resort to virtually any measures necessary to the prosecution of the war – including imposing martial law on civilians – by the Defence of the Realm Act, popularly and sardonically known as ‘D.O.R.A.’ As Arthur

Marwick observed, it ‘conjured up in the public mind the image of a cruel and capricious maiden who at the snap of her fingers could close down a newspaper, requisition a ship, or prohibit whistling for cabs’ (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 30-31)

As Rose continues, D.O.R.A. was the proverbial “Big Sister” of the war – she had permission to do many of the things we also see Big Brother and the Thought Police, or even Winston himself at his workplace, doing. Having been a child entering his formative years during World War One, it does not seem unlikely that Orwell would have looked back at his childhood and seen the potential horrors of a system like D.O.R.A. if it had been allowed to continue to exist after the war.

Why the Genres Matter:

We have now reached a point where we cannot discuss the impact of Wells and Orwell’s political opinions in *The War of the Worlds* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* without also discussing why the genres matter as much as they do, as they are an integral part of the messages they want to convey to their audiences. Specifically, when it comes to Orwell is it important to also include the genres he chose, to tell the tale of Winston and Oceania, as they are deeply ingrained into how he treats politics throughout the novel. Something as equally important to keep in mind about science fiction is what it can do for us as readers. “By compelling us to imagine a different order, science fiction cultivates in us the capacity to conceive of our contemporary situation in a dynamic manner, whether in terms of its disintegration or rejuvenation, making it the literary genre that perhaps most actively fosters a sense of historical as well as ... unhistorical consciousness in the present.” (Paik 2).

In the case of both novels, the authors’ use science fiction as a main genre matter because of what it allows them to do with the scenarios they are presenting to the reader, as well as the topics they want us to consider. Wells uses it to invent an entirely new kind of threat to humanity in the form of the hostile Martians and their extremely advanced technology, turning everything upside

down in Victorian England as the supposedly superior people suddenly find themselves as the victims of a ruthless, imperialistic invasion. Lem praises Wells for his decision of turning the then popular genre of invasion narratives into something completely new, but acknowledges that it must not have been an easy feat.

In inventing the invaders from Mars, Wells in turn faced another exceedingly difficult task, because the realist venture embarked upon demanded simultaneously hard facts and the creation of a fantastic 'otherness' that prevents the reader responding to the cosmic invaders as no more than scarecrows, mere mummery. This means that both they and their equipment had to be provided with a sense of inhumanity at the same time as functionality. (Lem 20-21)

It can be argued that Wells did not have to invent an entirely new sub-genre of science fiction, if he wanted to write an invasion narrative of his own. Much like other writers around that time, he could have had the enemy be the Germans or the French or some other common enemy that the British people already feared. Yet, as has already been mentioned in the analysis, he chose not to do this, so that he could explore Huxley's theories on humans' capacity for "sympathy" and what is essentially emotional development when faced with a life or death situation. "Huxley wanted to explain how notions of right and wrong could have come about without divine intervention, how benevolence and self-sacrifice could evolve from competition for survival. His answer was that morality is a development of the 'sympathy' some creatures feel for others of their kind, a trait reinforced by evolution because it promotes the survival of the group." (Sherborne 126). By forcing his characters into situations where it is, in the case of the narrator's brother for instance, a question of trampling others down or being trampled when he gets caught up in a fleeing crowd, Wells can explore how he thinks people might react in such moments of stress. For the narrator's younger brother, it means reaching out to help and assist his fellow people and, when the situation becomes too dangerous for himself and his travelling companions, withdrawing to find another route. "Let us go back!" he

shouted, and began turning the pony round. ‘We cannot cross this – hell,’ he said and they went back a hundred yards the way they had come, until the fighting crowd was hidden.” (Wells 110). Only when he realizes that there is no other possible route does he return to the pandemonium of travelers. The narrator, on the other hand, after being forced into isolation with the curate – a man with whom he can find no cooperation – ends up knocking his fellow refugee unconscious and leaving him for dead to the Martians, evidently forced into a much more direct version of Darwin’s “survival of the fittest”. “‘What are these Martians?’ wails a curate, his beliefs and wits overturned by events. ‘What are we?’ retorts the narrator, later clubbing his clerical companion over the head and leaving him to have his blood sucked out. The narrator is able to escape death because he, too, is a ruthless combatant in the struggle for survival.” (Sherborne 127-128). We can, of course, argue here that such scenarios could also have been speculated on in an invasion narrative with human enemies. Yet the apparent lack of any other emotional capacity amongst the Martians, compared to the humans’ ability to either cooperate or devolve to their most basic of survival instincts sets up a contrast that could otherwise not have been achieved with a human adversary – not without demonizing that enemy, at any rate.

For Orwell, his use of the combination of dystopia and science fiction, while simultaneously twisting some utopian elements, is extremely effective for establishing the mood of the novel. As has already been stated, there is from start to finish of the no space that is ever safe to the characters, not even their own minds, and nearly every location is marked by a sense of dreary gloom and decay. A utopia only for those in power, dystopia for everyone else. The choice of genres only help further cementing this fact, by being set in a future that very well have become a reality; furthermore, as with Wells science fiction forces its readers to imagine something – most often a society – that is irregular and out of order, compared to the time that we know ourselves to live in. That has not changed, simply because we are now looking at a different book by a different

author. Instead, let us turn our gaze to a third genre that should not go overlooked when discussing *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: the political satire. As mentioned earlier in a quote by Orwell to his publisher, it was always his intention to "...discuss the implications of dividing the world up into 'Zones of influence' ... and in addition by parodying them the intellectual implications of totalitarianism." (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 147). Crick highlights this quote, calling it "very specific", though it is not a complete confirmation that he intended it to be a political satire. Nevertheless, he makes an argument that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* shares a lot of its traits with the satire written by Jonathan Swift. "It may help if we write it out, as it was first published in London, as indeed a title, 'Nineteen Eighty-Four', and not as a date – 1984 – as it is too often rendered. For it is not a prophecy, it is plainly a satire and a satire of a particular, even a peculiar kind – a Swiftian satire." (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 146-147); to further support his claims, on pages 147-148 he offers a list of seven satiric themes present in the novel, ranging from the division of the world into three zones mirroring what happened to Europe following World War Two, to O'Brien and the Outer Party's totalitarianism and never-ending lust for power, to the connection between communism and capitalism as proposed by James Burnham. And Crick is not the only one to point out the similarities between Swiftian satire and Orwell's work; both he and Hitchens quote Czeslaw Milosz on describing how Orwell and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were viewed under Stalinist Warsaw: "A few have become acquainted with Orwell's 1984; because it is both difficult to obtain and dangerous to possess, it is known only to certain members of the Inner Party. Orwell fascinates them through his insight into details they know well and through his use of Swiftian satire." (George Orwell: Into the Twenty-First Century 82). Of course, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Orwell also provoked the totalitarian governments – they did not approve of his supposed attack on their system. But what they failed to realize is that he is not merely

satirizing totalitarianism; he is also bringing in European capitalism through Winston and his memories of a time before Oceania was a country. As Resch notes:

Winston represents a vestige of the union of middle-class individualism and working-class community that Orwell believes to be the agent of socialist transformation. ... Oceania is not just a satire on the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, or merely a warning of a global tendency toward totalitarianism, or, finally, simply a piece of antitotalitarian propaganda ... Oceania is all of these things, but before it is any of them, it is a parodic inversion of Orwell's own populist socialism, and, therefore, the opposition of totalitarianism and socialism may be said to constitute the novel's deep structure. (Resch 154-155).

Yet others, commented on by Robert Conquest in chapter 10 of *The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell*, deny that Orwell targeted the Soviet Union with his depiction of Oceania, calling it "...a general satire on tyranny everywhere." (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 130), despite the fact that several of the concepts and organizations of Oceania were present in the Soviet Union.

On a final, more lighthearted note concerning satire as a genre in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it can be discussed whether or not some of Orwell's inspirations for the locations of Oceania are points of satire on their own. As Rossi and Rodden state, Orwell worked two years at the BBC, a job he hated – yet inspiration for *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was drawn from this experience. "From his time at the BBC Orwell absorbed many of the ideas that would later surface in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The Ministry of Truth, some elements of Newspeak, and the ghastly cafeteria in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were inspired by Orwell's time at the BBC." (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 8). By making these areas that perhaps most accurately sums up Winston's daily misery at a job he does not care overly much for, surrounded by people who he can barely call his friends at best and potential sources of betrayal and danger at worst, reminiscent of his time working at the BBC, is

Orwell subtly critiquing the BBC as an organization? After all, it was “[h]is Spanish experiences, his frustrations with the BBC’s bureaucracy and his growing conviction that the idea of objective truth was being undermined by totalitarianism all played a part in giving birth to Orwell’s dystopia.” (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 9).

Wells, Orwell, Politics and Society Today:

Finally, we have reached the final part of the discussion, seeking to find the answers to this last question: how and why did H. G. Wells and George Orwell become such significant influences upon modern politics? What is the proof that they even did in the first place? Truthfully, the answers to these questions can already be found in the theory- and analysis sections; but for all that they can be said to have influenced politics and fiction in a positive manner, they have also had their issues and actions that are deserving of critique and debate. Likewise, people have already read and misinterpreted their works a myriad of times with results that are worth mentioning here.

To claim that Wells himself was, more often than not, his own biggest obstacle in getting a breakthrough with a lot of the things he aspired to be might seem strange at first. Nonetheless, that was the case for his life as an academic in particular; because he was always looking forwards to his next opportunity to get ahead in life, ever ambitious, he had his fair share of stepping on other people’s feet, so to speak. If we go back to the part of the theory-section concerning his childhood and youth, Wells directly betrayed his benefactor and teacher Byatt in favor of accepting the scholarship to study under Huxley. “Not unreasonably, Byatt was furious. Why hadn’t he had the decency to discuss the matter before he posted the application? How could he treat his benefactor in this cavalier way? It was a *fait accompli*, however, and Byatt was a reasonable man whose job, after all, was to help young people in their progress through life.” (Sherborne 52). Byatt did eventually let Wells go with his blessings, but little information on their later relationship is available – presumably, this is a bridge that Wells had to burn to further his ambitions. Did the young Wells

make the right choice at this point in time, by declining a stable position as a teacher in the province? In terms of becoming the man and author that we all know today, the answer is yes, even if he wasted the rest of his years the Normal School of Science due to a lack of interest in the topics not taught by Huxley. But as brought up by Partington: “The year 1888 is significant as being Wells's first free year following his departure from the Normal School of Science. From that time on he was able to ponder the principles of 'ethical evolution' as imparted in him by T.H. Huxley and it is not too much to say that Huxley's teaching influenced all aspects of Wells's thought.” (Partington 2-3). We know this already – Wells’ idolization of Huxley and how “ethical evolution” remained a stable throughout the entirety of his career as a political author. One thing that bears brought up again in connection to Huxley, however, is once again Wells’ stance on eugenics, as it is in truth difficult to get a complete grasp of what his beliefs were. On one hand Wells denounced the likes of Francis Galton, whose ideas on positive eugenics “...strove for human perfection...” and aimed to “...dam back 'by invincible dams' human '[c]hange and development'...”. Wells’ stance on such practices were that they would eventually lead to the extinction of the human race, as he theorizes on in *The Time Machine* (Partington 50). Yet, on the other hand lurks *Anticipations* in the background as perhaps one of Wells’ biggest errors in his established career, as has already been covered. Thanks to a lot of critique from friends as well as strangers, Wells would come to change his view on eugenics and commit to further research and obtain a better understanding of the topics he wrote about, but there is room for speculating what would have happened if he had not been critiqued as viciously as he was and thus not forced to change his views and learn.

Perhaps the key criticism to be made of the New Republic is that Wells founds it on a bogus appeal to Darwinism, claiming that the movement is part of ‘the mighty scheme’ of natural selection in which ‘the tiger calls for[th] wisdom and courage out of man’. Wells was evidently short of a tiger or two when he adopted this perspective, as the basis of biological evolution is

adaptation to existing conditions, not hypothetical future ones. ... no utopian vision can be justified by Darwinism, which, by its nature, is explanatory of the past, not predictive of the future. Wells had lapsed, not for the last time, into a naïve secularization of religious ideas.

(Sherborne 149)

Fortunately, Wells was critiqued and incentivized to learn and grow from the mistakes of *Anticipations*. That is not to say that Wells did not have any ideas in the book that were well received, but as Wells revised and reworked his theories they only continued to improve. Of course, there were still those who wanted to use *Anticipations* to forever condemn Wells, but all such criticisms were made obsolete with the publication of *Mankind in the Making* (1903) and *A Modern Utopia* (1905) which saw even further changes and revisions to what could be found in *Anticipations*.

When it comes down to it, H. G. Wells was a man who believed in a future which was both incredibly similar to our world as it is now, but also different. He theorized about science and technology far beyond his time and even brought some of it to life in *The War of the Worlds* or in his works on political theory like the previously mentioned *Anticipations* and *The New World Order*. Wells wished for a world in which all people lived under a united world state, which would provide its citizens with basic care – including minimum wages, housing, education and human rights for all regardless of gender or race. Regarding these dreams and ideals for the world, society is still far from what he envisioned, and he should not be treated like a prophet. Even so, some things he did predict or had an unintentional hand in the creation of. While not the exact same as what he proposed, we do now have a set of universal human rights following World War Two, and we are making steady progress in obtaining universal equality. Wells could perhaps even rightfully be credited for inspiring the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as he brought the drafts of his “Rights of Man” to President Roosevelt (Partington 139). In the end, however, while the public

today might primarily know him as the man who wrote *The War of the Worlds* and other famous science fiction novels, it cannot be denied that H. G. Wells was one of the most prominent and influential political voices of his age, and thus a man who had a significant impact on our world as we know it today.

Interestingly, an argument can be made that it is not within Great Britain that Orwell has been the most influential, and not through his political writing – at least not at first. Instead, George Orwell's biggest impact is likely to have happened in the nations living under totalitarian governments of their own, particularly the people living under communist rule, through the publications of *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Because fact of the matter is that Orwell, a westerner who had never set foot in the Soviet Union and whose only contact with them had been through what he experienced in the Spanish War and the British Left, had a much better understanding of what life in a totalitarian state was like than the people living in it. Vladimir Shlapentokh writes about this in "George Orwell: Russia's Tocqueville", chapter nineteen of *George Orwell: Into the Twenty-First Century*, comparing him to the French count Alexis Tocqueville who travelled through America for half a year and gained a better understanding of its democracy than the Americans themselves ever did.

With his formidable intuition, he recognized many elements of Soviet life that escaped the notice of Western observers as well as the Soviet intellectuals of the time. Orwell may in fact deserve more credit than Tocqueville, because he did not have the advantage of visiting the USSR. Indeed, the French count traveled in America for six months, while Orwell never once crossed the border of Stalin's empire. (George Orwell: Into the Twenty-First Century 267)

Of course, as Shlapentokh elaborates, the fact that a supposed socialist – a man who had never even set foot in the Soviet Union – could write such a thing did not sit well with a lot of people, both in

England and in the USSR. Critics saw it as either another dystopian fable or antiutopian novel or as an accurate depiction of life in the Soviet Union in the twentieth century (George Orwell: *Into the Twenty-First Century* 267-268). It needs no comment here that the majority of the Russians who found themselves reading *Nineteen Eighty-Four* belonged amongst the latter group, and that compared to its reception amongst the British Left, Russian academics were quite taken with the novel. Shlapentokh states that he himself never had the chance to actually gain access to the novel until 16 years after its publication, and that it had to happen in secrecy. “In those years, to read Orwell, to share *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with others, or even to discuss it was considered no less than “the dissemination of anti-Soviet slander.” Though you would not be sentenced to a concentration camp for this felony, you might find yourself in serious trouble. You might, for instance, be ousted from your research post or teaching position.” (George Orwell: *Into the Twenty-First Century* 272). The fact that this anecdote shares an almost frighteningly lot of similarities with not just what Winston went through to obtain Goldstein’s supposed book, but also the fear what would happen should Shlapentokh have been discovered with it in his possession is chilling. Furthermore, the feelings he describes, as part of that same story of his first experience with *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, when he returns from a business trip and finds the book missing from his luggage are also reminiscent of Winston’s fear of the Thought Police catching him. Having this perspective in mind, it makes a lot of sense to argue for Orwell and his writings having a bigger impact outside of England than within it. In addition to Shlapentokh’s experiences, Erika Gottlieb makes a compelling argument in “George Orwell: a bibliographic essay”, chapter 15 of *The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell*, that Orwell himself did well to fear the USSR government. While criticizing the trend from the 1970s that subjected “...Winston – in essence his author – to Freudian psychoanalysis...” (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 192) to the point that the vocabulary that labelled him paranoid or hysterical entered the language of his biographers, she

brings up the evidence found by Hitchens, D. J. Taylor and Gordon Bowker that the KGB were indeed out to capture and prosecute Orwell.

...he was considered by Moscow as a ‘rabid Trotskyist’, fated, most likely, to be eliminated at a rigged trial had the communists stayed in power in Spain. From the KGB files it is also clear that Orwell was followed by Comintern agents not only while in Spain, but also after his return to London; Peter Smolka, surreptitious Stalinist agent at the BBC, played an important part in suppressing the publication of *Animal Farm*. (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 193).

It arguably says something about how big of a threat the Soviet Union viewed Orwell if they were going as far as actively sabotaging his work both before and after his death, going as far as having their own scholars and academics brush off *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as nothing more than a sick man’s ramblings. “In other words, by now it is quite clear that Orwell’s antagonism to Soviet terror, to the Stalinist Left in England and to their control of much of British literary life was not irrational, that is, not based on what Bowker refers to as ‘paranoia’ or a persecution complex.” (The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell 193).

On a final note, an interesting aspect of modern politics is that while the British Left disliked Orwell and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* at first, he has since then been claimed, disowned, and reclaimed several times by both the Left and the Right. Fusco blames this, in part, on the “Orwell Fever”: “In order to illustrate how badly Orwell’s writing has been misread and misused as propaganda, one has only to take a look back at the rhetoric of political speakers and writers in the middle 1980s, the zenith of what one might refer to as “Orwell Fever”.” (Fusco 3). As was briefly commented on in the theory section, Fusco argues that both sides have used Orwell’s name and the term “Orwellian” several time just for the sake of adding ethos to their own propaganda, and he quotes Rodden coining the two as the new “Frankenstein”: “[Orwell] has become the Dr. Frankenstein of the

twentieth century. And as has happened with the good doctor, one wonders if we will one day forget the man George Orwell and associate his name exclusively with his brilliant, horrible creation.” (Fusco 3). How interesting that the man who denounced his father’s Tory England, but never really fit in with British Left either, would suddenly become a figure that both sides would fight over having the metaphorical rights to – in the process failing to realize that for a man who has had as great an impact on how we view and define totalitarianism as he did, even if he never truly belonged to either crowd still, despite everything, place himself firmly on the Left.

CONCLUSION:

To summarize: this thesis set out with a specific goal – to gain a better understanding of how culture, politics and society affect one another mutually, while also factoring in the differences of the time-periods and eras in which culture and society changes. In order to obtain this goal, it was decided to do an in-depth textual analysis of two works of fiction by some of the most well-known authors of the late-nineteenth century and twentieth century – Herbert George Wells’ science fiction novel *The War of the Worlds* and George Orwell’s dystopian science fiction novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The choice fell on analyzing fiction based on the fact that understanding what kind of fiction was popular in a given era will also result in obtaining an understanding of the mindsets, hopes and fears were prevalent amongst the people of said era. Furthermore, the genres of science fiction and dystopia were chosen because they are commonly used by authors as a part of speculative fiction in order to voice their opinions or ideas of what the unknown future might look like. Finally, the choice in authors fell upon Wells and Orwell as, aside from being authors of science fiction from the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century, they were both prolific authors of political prose as well, and have influenced our modern day politics through both their fiction and non-fiction political writings. Furthermore, while they may be authors from the previous century, they are still highly relevant to both fiction and politics as well. Thus, the research question of this thesis

focuses first and foremost on identifying which areas of world politics and society we can find the proof of Wells' and Orwell's influence as writers, with sub-topics examining how their political opinions and concerns can be identified within their respective novels, and how they use science fiction and dystopia to convey their messages.

H. G. Wells largely based his political ideology on the scientific teachings and theories of Thomas H. Huxley concerning what he called "ethical evolution" and put them into a socialistic- and later cosmopolitan context. We can identify his musings on Huxley's theories on human evolution and our emotional capacity in *The War of the Worlds* by examining the differences between the, in theory, evolutionally inferior humans compared to the highly evolved and technologically advanced Martian invaders. By putting these musings into the context of an invasion narrative, in which the people of England suddenly find themselves on the receiving end of an imperialistic army, he subjects his characters to several high-stress and high-emotion situations where they either succumb to the base instincts of ensuring their own survival or reach out and help their fellow people. Through the invasion narrative we are also given a glimpse into Wells' opinions on what costs empire building has, as well as his stance on eugenics through the pipedream of an artilleryman whom the narrator comes across. The genre of science fiction is used to add to the severity of the situation as, instead of another nation attacking England, it is creatures from another planet – a sub-genre of science fiction that Wells is credited with inventing. In terms of Wells' influence upon international politics and society, the research and discussion reveal him as a man who was progressive for the era. As a firm believer in human rights, equality and a united world, he can tentatively be credited for being the reason why we have the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as he gave his own draft of how he envisioned human rights to President Roosevelt.

George Orwell, compared to Wells, was a man of contradictions in terms of his political leanings. He considered himself a socialist and was firmly against the British Empire and

capitalism, but he was also capable of identifying the issues with the Soviet Union despite the enthusiasm the British Left felt for it. His concerns for the development of socialism and capitalism in the post-war period of World War Two are clear in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, presenting the reader with a society that is in decay in which the Inner Party thrives and lives in near luxury, while the Outer Party and the Proles live with constant scarcity of household products and basic necessities, and where there is no such thing as freedom of thought or individuality – a society reminiscent of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. While generally considered a dystopic, science fiction novel, Orwell's intention for the novel was for it to be a dystopic satire of life in the post-World War Two years, with the world divided into zones of power and nations either still caught up in totalitarian regimes or recovering from being freed of them. His influence on the world can be identified less in politics and more in culture in general; the term "Orwellian" is used to describe a specific kind of totalitarian regime, and there are few who do not know what "Big Brother is watching you" means, even if they are not familiar with the phrase.

Thus concludes this thesis.

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