

## H.G Wells and the Uncertainties of Progress

Peter J. Bowler

Peter J. Bolwer is a biological historian who has published extensively on the history of environmental sciences and genetics. In an essay on [publicdomainreview.org](http://publicdomainreview.org), he writes about H.G.Wells' uncertainties about progress and the future of humanity. H.G. Wells is an author of non-fiction works through which he gained his name. He focused on the topics: the effects of technology, human folly, and the idea of progress in his stories. As per the notion of Wells a brighter future was riddled with complexities

He wrote a novel '**The Time Machine.**' in which he explained the increasing inequality and class divisions and the fear of uncertainty among people in 1895. The present technological innovations were revolutionising life Wells supported technological advancements, but he believed that people do not know how to use and where to use them.. He thought that they might lead to catastrophic wars. He dreamt that the driving force behind progress in human society was rational thinking, science, and technological innovation. Technological innovation would require societal transformation. Wells was excellent at guessing where technology was headed at the time; he knew that anticipating future inventions and their repercussions would almost certainly necessitate a new concept of progress.

In the science fiction novel **The War in the Air**, he wrote that technological and scientific development leads to more effective and more deadly warfare. It was written in 1907 and published in 1908. He also believed that aeroplane technology would be utilised not only for transportation, mapping, and research, but also for fighting wars. Wright Brothers' first successful flight occurred in 1903. Although World War I occurred during that time period, aviation technology did not advance quickly enough to turn the conflict into a war in the air. There were German airship raids on London, but planes of the time couldn't deliver the bombardment and carnage that Wells anticipated. It became a reality in World War II.

H.G.Wells has revealed the government conspiracy in the plot. He said that the Wright Brothers and other aviation pioneers all around the world were disappearing from public view due to their involvement in secret military operations to build aviation weapons. Many scientists were kept secret to build rockets and the atomic weapons, and some are still hidden in some parts of the world today.

Peter J. Bowler wrote in his article that Marxists saw history as a ladder leading to a utopia. However, Darwinists believed that a branching tree was a better representation of our life history. Wells considered the evolution of science and industry as Darwinian. He believed that scientific and technical progress was outpacing society, culture, and politics and people are not ready for the changes.

Another book he wrote in 1914, *The World Set Free*, predicted that the latest discoveries of atomic physics would give the world a new source of power and also an atomic bomb. He expressed his fears in his 1933 novel, *The Shape of Things to Come*. The war fought in this story reduces civilized humans into savages. His only optimism in the story was that a few technocrats would survive and rebuild society under new, more reasonable beliefs.

*"I do not know with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones."* – Albert Einstein

The historian Philip Blom calls the early twentieth century the 'vertigo years', when everyday life was transformed by a bewildering array of new technologies. Technophiles celebrate their innovations as the driving force of progress, yet they have no idea what will be invented or what the long-term consequences will be for society.