

Journal of Sustainable Development, 2015, vol.8, N5, pages 62-70

Global utopias of H. G. Wells and Kang Youwei: Comparative confrontation

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Abstract

© the author(s). The existing studies conducted in the field of social ideals are characterised by the Eurocentric approach. The aim of the given paper is to analyse two varieties of social ideal created in China and Great Britain at the beginning of the XXth century, which share a number of common peculiarities. The first one was offered by a British socialist, a member of the Fabian society-Herbert George Wells (1866-1946), the second was created by a famous Chinese thinker, a reformer and a representative of modern Neo-Confucianism-Kang Youwei (1858-1927). The research is based on the comparative method with the application of the functional analysis. It allowed us to compare the social ideals created within two genetically non-related cultures. The article shows that both Wells and Kang Youwei were concerned with global world reorganization, however they come to different results. Wells offered the model of an elite and authoritative Utopia, whose citizens are exposed to selection and segregation according to the strict moral code based on Confucianism. Regulations and standards are carried out by a special organization, the Samurai Order, which is very similar to the "guards" of the Plato Republic or phylarhces in Thomas More's Utopia. Kang Youwei offered the model of absolute freedom and open society free from any social, intellectual, ethnic and gender barriers. Moreover, he considered hedonism as the key feature of the human nature. The article submissions may be useful for researchers dealing with social utopias, comparative philosophy and history of social thought of the XXth century.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jsd.v8n5p62>

Keywords

Confucianism, Globalism, Great unity (Datong), Utopia