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## **Technology, Class Division and Evolutionary Concerns in H.G. Wells' The Time Machine**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), often regarded as the first modern science fiction novel, explores the possibility of time travel alongside profound socio-political and evolutionary concerns. Through the imagination of Eloi and Morlocks in the year 802,701 A.D., Wells critiques the class divide of Victorian England, linking it to Darwin's theory of natural selection. This paper examines the novel not merely as a futuristic fantasy but as a text deeply embedded in debates around science, technology, industrialisation and class struggle. Wells anticipates the paradox of technological advancement—while it promises comfort and progress, it simultaneously risks creating weakness, inequality and dependence. The novel thus becomes both a scientific speculation and a social allegory, portraying the ambivalent consequences of innovation and the essential role of compassion in the survival of humanity.

**KEYWORDS:** H.G. Wells, The Time Machine, Science Fiction, Time Travel, Technology, Social Inequality, Darwinism, Victorian Age.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

HG Wells, known as the father of science fiction, presented his excellent work *The Time Machine* back in 1895. Until now, time travel has remained the most debatable topic as most people believe it can be possible. However, this topic remained blurred in most of the spaces. We have seen it in many movies and textual works that have represented time travel in such a subtle manner that sometimes it appears that there is a lot of logic to believe that it can be possible. Within time, most people also denied this fact and one of them was Stephen Hawking. Hawking, in his book, once said,

“The best evidence we have that time travel is not possible and never will be, is that we have not been invaded by hordes of tourists from the future” (Hawking 154).

Time travel might sound piece sensible, yet there is a hypothesis related to time travel that favors the chance of time travel. Well-known researcher Albert Einstein with the specialized terms connected with material science, upheld time travel with the theory of special relativity. Onto this, Hawking remarked,

“Time travel used to be thought of as just science fiction, but Einstein's general theory of relativity allows for the possibility that we could warp space-time so much that you could go off in a rocket and return before you set out” (King)



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Returning to the primary focus of this study work, Wells was a Norman School of Science student. His ongoing fascination with the mechanics of physics and biology led him to create and write such masterpieces. Although *The Time Machine* suggests a high degree of fantasy and imagination, making it sound like a children's narrative, it is believed to be the primary text for evaluating future works. Many of the works and films came close to adopting the notion of time travel and did it admirably. Christopher Nolan is a well-known Hollywood director. The majority of Nolan's films are science fiction in nature and hint at the possibility of time travel. Mike Chen, Annalee Newitz, Thea Lim and Octavia Butler are just a few of the many personalities who have worked on the notion of time travel in science fiction. Time travel has long been a contentious question between science and imagination. In an interview published post about *The Time Machine*, Wells says,

“Why should four-fifths of the fiction of today be concerned with times that can never come again, while the future is scarcely speculated upon? At present we are almost helpless in the grip of circumstances and I think we ought to strive to shape our destinies. Changes that directly affect the human race are taking place every day, but they are passed over unobserved” (Tearle).

Wells begins by introducing the main character, Time Traveller, who describes time as the fourth dimension. During the study, Albert Einstein presented the four-dimensional hypothesis. We have three perspectives on the world. Einstein postulated a fourth dimension, which he called space/time. He claimed that gravitational waves are caused by energy from dark openings colliding and that they go through things without adapting. Einstein once said,

“No man can visualize four dimensions, except mathematically. I think in four dimensions, but only abstractly. The human mind can picture these dimensions no more than envisage electricity. Nevertheless, they are no less real than electromagnetism, the force which controls our universe, within and by which we have our being” (Viereck).

Wells, staying alert about the economic framework, depicted the conceivable futuristic ideas through this work and the pundit of the social gap during that time. When the Time Traveller lands in 802,701 AD, Wells refers to Eloi and Morlocks, which addressed the opening of individuals during the Victorian Age. Through the assistance of this incredible work, Wells introduced Eloi as the bourgeoisie of British society. They have made their lives loaded with all facilities and comfort, but they are not more grounded in battling unusual circumstances. On the other hand, the Morlocks, portrayed as a deprived class, have contributed so much energy underground that they have lost their ability to search for a superior future and have gone to barbarianism. Wells utilizes the qualifications between these two species to fight that the socially awkward nature in Victorian England was so sharp and hurting that they could make the human species split into two categories, each tending to a piece of humankind's most horrible characteristics.



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“Looking round, with a sudden thought, from a terrace on which I rested for a while, I realised that there were no small houses to be seen. Apparently, the single house and possibly even the household, had vanished. Among the greenery were palace-like buildings, but the house and the cottage, which form such characteristic features of our English landscape, had disappeared” (Wells 26).

While returning to our focal thought of innovation, Wells' work characterizes the futuristic things that should be possible in the near future. It shows the imagination and insight of humankind. Likewise, the representation of the simple existence of Eloi shows the ideal future and deception of a perfect world where things will be taken care of and people can be served well by innovation. As written in the time Victorian Age, Wells recognizes that this work is an ideal illustration of how things will function in the not-so-distant future as industrialisation has begun in England. Wells shows his consistent interest in the help of humankind through innovation.

Additionally, when we associate it with the laborers and the bourgeoisie of the Victorian Age, it likewise addresses that this innovation, which we are concocting, we don't know about its positive and negative elements by placing Eloi and Morlocks in inconspicuous classification. The difference and duality between humankind have been observed in the Time Machine. Wells doesn't provide a fundamental solution to whether or not innovation is great or unfavourable for people. From one viewpoint, innovative progression can work on individuals' lives. However, it can likewise obliterate the circumstances that make individuals dynamic and fit and create social divisions. In alternate ways, the Time Traveller can be considered a representation of science itself. Wells continually makes speculations about the future and afterward changes them in light of perception to create information, like the analytical technique. Assuming the Time Traveller addresses science liberated from undermining prevailing difficulties, Wells suggests through this story is all about the fundamental rights of every citizen and the service of technology for everyone and the best possible use to bring happiness and prosperity to humanity.

“It seemed to me that I had happened upon humanity upon the wane. The ruddy sunset set me thinking of the sunset of mankind. For the first time I began to realise an odd consequence of the social effort in which we are at present engaged. And yet, come to think, it is a logical consequence enough. Strength is the outcome of need; security sets a premium on feebleness. The work of ameliorating the conditions of life—the true civilising process that makes life more and more secure—had gone steadily on to a climax” (Wells 27).

Aside from the part about time travel Wells likewise relates it with a modern organic perspective. In sci-fi, many works convey the evolution of human physiology. They discuss the termination of species and the appearance of new species with the ongoing changes humanity will look at in the future. The Time Machine was published after around 35 years of the presence of



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Charles Darwin's well-known work, *The Origin of The Species*. In this exemplary work of Darwin, he discusses the development humankind has been through.

“Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being, evolved” (Darwin 217).

In his work *Time Machine*, Wells follows the setting of Darwin intently, which discusses natural selection. However, the Eloi in the *Time Machine* can be considered as the descendants of the privileged society of the Victorian Age, yet it additionally connotes that notwithstanding the entirety of their lavishness and well-off living style, which had made them senseless and powerless, they have been consistently gone after by the Morlocks. While discussing the Morlocks, Wells depicted them as the casualty of this modern time, which has disregarded their privileges and pushed them into the obscurity. This imbalance and social shamefulness can prompt class separation and this will influence their advancement. However, it is all imaginary yet Wells attempted to depict the class contrast.

After losing it, Time Traveller had to fight the Morlocks for the *Time Machine*. Wells uses the *Time Machine* to illustrate the beneficial and terrible aspects of technology at this point in the novel. After his essential preliminaries, the Time Traveller agrees that the time machine will effectively be accessible to him at some point, demonstrating that he isn't as rational as he appears to be. Finally, the Time Traveller is alone with the Morlocks in the dark, without any of the equipment he carries back from the invention centre. Innovation, in any event, saves him — the time machine, the specific machine that put him in this situation in the first place. This was the moment of significant differences in innovation's role, as it both risks and protects him.

“I tried to look at the thing in a scientific spirit. After all, they were less human and more remote than our cannibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago. And the intelligence that would have made this state of things a torment had gone. Why should I trouble myself? These Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon—probably saw to the breeding of. And there was Weena dancing at my side” (Wells 56).

Wells refutes the widespread belief that technology would make life better for people throughout the narrative. He also discusses the pitfalls of conventional technologies. With Eloi's high-quality existence, which is stress-free except for Morlock's attacks and the Morlocks' daily struggle for survival, Wells emphasises that even the utopian goal will be challenging to achieve without making the best use of technology and its service to all of humanity.



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“It is a law of nature we overlook, that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger and trouble. An animal perfectly in harmony with its environment is a perfect mechanism. Nature never appeals to intelligence until habit and instinct are useless. There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need of change. Only those animals partake of intelligence that have to meet a huge variety of needs and dangers” (Wells 71-72).

Wells writes of the warmth and affection he received from Weena, one of the Eloi while composing the epilogue. He says that humans will be weak and lacking in ideological thinking with all of this advancement and technology, but that love and kindness are inextricably linked to them. Wells uses Weena as an example, writing,

“But to me the future is still black and blank—is a vast ignorance, lit at a few casual places by the memory of his story. And I have by me, for my comfort, two strange white flowers—shrivelled now and brown and flat and brittle—to witness that even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man” (Wells 84).

## CONCLUSION:

*The Time Machine* is more than a speculative fantasy about time travel—it is a profound meditation on class conflict, evolutionary change and the ambivalent role of technology. The Eloi, representing the privileged classes, embody fragility, comfort and decadence, while the Morlocks, as the oppressed labourers, symbolise exploitation, dehumanisation and eventual revolt. Wells demonstrates that unchecked industrialisation and class disparity can lead to the degeneration of humanity into fragmented species. At the same time, Wells underscores the paradox of science and technology. The time machine itself symbolises both risk and rescue, destruction and survival. While technological progress can elevate human life, it can also exacerbate divisions and weaken human resilience. Ultimately, Wells concludes that compassion and tenderness, symbolised by the character of Weena and the flowers she offers, remain humanity’s most enduring qualities. Even in the face of degeneration and uncertainty, love and gratitude outlive power and intellect, leaving hope for a humane future.

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