

# The Downfall of Mankind in H.G.Wells's "The Time Machine"

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Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2018

*Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj:* **Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Filozofski fakultet**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:458446>

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*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2024-11-24**



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Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskoga jezika i  
književnosti i pedagogije

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**Propast čovječanstva u „Vremeplovu“ H.G. Wellsa**

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Mentor: doc. dr.sc. Ljubica Matek

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Znanstveno područje: humanističke znanosti

Znanstveno polje: filologija

Znanstvena grana: anglistika

Mentor: doc. dr.sc. Ljubica Matek

Osijek, 2018

J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

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Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Ljubica Matek, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

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Scientific field: philology

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## **Abstract**

Time travelling is a common theme of many writers and scientists. George Herbert Wells describes his vision of the future in his novel *The Time Machine*. The hero of the novel, Time Traveller, meets unusual creatures and starts to interact with them. Eloi and Morlocks resemble humans to a certain extent, but further inspection will show how significant the difference between them and today's people is. The hierarchy between the two races turns out to be more complicated than the Time Traveller speculated at first. Also, their lifestyle, society, ways of behaviour, rules and values are quite different from what he expects. The future society is unfamiliar with the concepts of family, friendship, sex and gender, religion, art, politics, money, work, private property and similar concepts that determine human social behaviour. Eloi and Morlocks have undergone significant biological and psychological changes in comparison to today's human society. They have both human and animalistic traits which makes them a great subject for analysing the concept of evolution and degeneration. It is difficult to determine whether the world has advanced or degenerated in the future because the novel remains ambiguous on this issue. Further exploration of the future shows that the world is going to change radically and most species will go extinct. The nature changes as well, and all human-like creatures will eventually vanish. This novel can be interpreted as a prophecy and warning to mankind that something has to change in order for people to avoid the future as it is described in the novel.

**Keywords:** degeneration, Eloi, evolution, Morlocks, time machine, time travelling, utopia

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## Introduction

The concept of time travelling is unarguably an important factor in science fiction literature. It has intrigued scientists and writers who display various hypotheses and predictions about the world in the future in their work. Herbert George Wells is not the only author who touches upon this topic, but many find him to be among the most important, if not the most important, figure of modern science fiction. In his essay “The Early Fiction of H.G. Wells: Fantasies of Science”, Glendening describes Wells as the originator of modern science fiction whose scientific romances, published between 1895 and the earliest years of twentieth century, secured that reputation. Wells is extremely interested in the future, and in his novel *The Time Machine*, he talks about the future world through the perspective of a scientist who sets himself into the future in order to explore the world. There he meets Eloi and Morlocks, and by analysing their life, he comes to a conclusion that the mankind will, eventually, decline. This dystopian novel represents a critique of today's society, but at the same time it is a warning about the potential decline in the future: “Sargent draws attention to the fact that not only Wells' early dystopias but even his later utopias show a profound distrust of human's ability to achieve a better form” (Elun 447). Wells connects the theory of evolution with his theories of degeneration and extinction. This novel, besides the decline of mankind and society, puts an emphasis on the decline of the Earth and the world itself. According to Pasquini, from a literary perspective, Wells is not the only author who writes about the aesthetics of extinction and there are several examples that speak of a literary trend which addressed extinction in some form, via catastrophe, genocide or divergence: for example, Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race*, Robert Cromie's *The Crack of Doom*, and Richard Jefferies *After London*.

This paper will analyse the downfall of mankind in the novel *The Time Machine* through several aspects. The first part of the paper will include an in-depth analysis of Eloi and Morlocks and the question of sex and gender in the future. The second part of the paper will be based on the future society and its lifestyle with parallel comparison with today's society. In the third and final phase, the ultimate stage of extinction will be depicted with an emphasis on nature, while the decline of mankind will be included in all three parts of the paper. The main goal of this paper is to portray the decadence and fall of the mankind and society in Wells' vision of the



future accompanied by the degeneration of Earth and the world that people know by using methods of interpretation and by analysing the society, while having in mind the important scientific discoveries of the Victorian age.

### **1. Creatures from the future**

Due to Time Traveller's incredibly ambitious and enthusiastic nature, he sets himself on a journey to the future in order to explore and understand the world better. This journey is initiated solely out of the curiosity of the Time Traveller, to see what awaits humanity in the distant future. The prerequisite for the adventure is, of course, the object which will transport him into the future, namely his very own Time Machine: "The thing Time Traveller held in his hand was a glittering metallic framework, scarcely larger than a small rock, and very delicately made. There was ivory in it, and some transparent crystalline substance" (Wells 8). At the very beginning of his journey, Time Traveller gives the reader an insight into his feelings during the transportation: "I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensation of the time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant" (Wells 19).

Upon his arrival in the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One A.D., Time Traveller has no idea what creatures he is going to encounter. After some time, he meets an Eloi whose physical appearance is described as follows:

He was a slight creature – perhaps four feet high-clad in a purple tunic girdled at the waist a leather belt. Sandals or buskins – I could not clearly distinguish which – were on his feet; his legs were bare to the knees, and his head was bare. He struck me as being a very beautiful and graceful creature, but indescribably frail. His flushed face reminded me of the more beautiful kind of consumptive – that hectic beauty of which we used to hear so much. (Wells 23)

In this description, Eloi are called "creatures" which implies that Time Traveller does not recognize them as humans due to their distinctive appearance. In his view, the Eloi are advanced and more progressive creatures than humans, whose physical appearance changed throughout the time because they had to adapt to the new way and conditions of life. Throughout history, certain

species had to undergo certain changes in order to survive, and with this stance, Wells's novel confirms the ideas brought forth in Darwin's theory of evolution.

The next description of Eloi emphasizes the differences between humans and Eloi even further: "Their hair, which was uniformly curly, came to a sharp end at the neck and cheek; there was not the faintest suggestion of it on the face, and their ears were singularly minute. The mouths were small, with bright red, rather thin lips and the little chins ran to a point. The eyes were large and mild" (Wells 25). Also, the Eloi are strict vegetarians which might be the result of their adaptation to new living conditions: "These people of the remote future were strict vegetarians" (Wells 27). The first impression of the Time Traveller regarding Eloi is that they are friendly, educated, and thoroughbred. When he initiates the conversation with them, he realises that these new creatures are speaking a different language than him: "I determined to make a resolute attempt to learn the speech of these new men of mine. I had some considerable difficulty in conveying my meaning (...) and my first attempts to make the exquisite little sounds of their language caused an immense amount of amusement" (Wells 27-28). Because Time Traveller is so fascinated with these new non-human, but human-like creatures, he tries to experiment with speech and learn their language. As expected, Time Traveller is having a hard time understanding what the Eloi are saying, but nevertheless, he has enough knowledge to make a comment about it: "There seemed to be few, if any abstract terms, or little use of figurative language. Their sentences were usually simple and of two words, and I failed to understand any but the simplest prepositions" (Wells 39). The fact that their communication is simple, without the usage of figurative language and abstract terms, puts a question mark on the progressiveness of "people from the future". At that point, Time Traveller is still fascinated with the new surroundings and yet unseen creatures so he does not suspect how relevant this information can be in understanding this new race.

It is interesting to note that the Eloi did not show any fear of the Time Traveller, who was to them so far, an unseen and obscure creature – a human. Time Traveller soon notices similarities between individuals and, although humans are also similar to one another the Eloi look almost the same: "Then in a flash, I perceived that all had same form of costume, and in all the differences of texture and bearing that no mark off the sexes from each other, these people of the future were alike" (Wells 29). The fact that one cannot differentiate between sexes, also

proves that people from the future, in some manner, had evolved. A question that logically arises is the following: Is it possible that in the distant future there is only one sex, and if yes, how do the Eloi reproduce? Time Traveller does not have a specific term for little Eloi creatures, but rather he simply calls them children: “And the children seemed to my eyes to be but miniatures of their parents” (Wells 29). He calls them children because he still believes that the Eloi are evolved humans. The fact that Eloi look alike at first glance does not appear as very important, but actually, their physical resemblance is just one part of a much bigger issue: their personality and the way the children are raised. Assuming that the Eloi are replicas of each other, adult Eloi are not making an effort to teach their children how to be unique and how to think about themselves as independent individuals. As a result of this, young Eloi are not used to thinking about the world from a different perspective; their curiosity is limited and they remain on the emotional and intellectual level of a child throughout their whole life.

Time Traveller spends time with the Eloi and somehow manages to comprehend what they are talking about. He notices another peculiar thing about his “new friends”, and that is their intellectual level and capacity. Because his world improves day by day in all its aspects, Time Traveller expects that Eloi would be much smarter and intellectually superior to him, but that is not the case:

You see I had always anticipated that the people of the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand odd would be incredibly in front of us in knowledge, art, everything. Then one of the suddenly asked me a question that showed him to be on the intellectual level of one of our five-year-old children – asked me, in fact, if I had come from the sun in a thunderstorm. (Wells 25)

The question that arises from this is the following: At what point in time and why does the mankind start to intellectually decline? Unfortunately, we can only assume and guess why that is the case because Wells does not touch upon the analysis of characters in such detail. Oswald Spengler analyses the concept of culture and civilization in his book *The Decline of the West*. According to him, cultures rise and fall, leaving nothing behind. He compares them with the four seasons, saying that they go through stages and then fade away: “To him, cultures are organisms of the highest form and why they grow and flourish in certain ways will remain a mystery” (Lenihan 8). Spengler differentiates eight cultures: Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian, Chinese,

Classical, Arabian, Mexican and Western, also called Faustian. Even throughout the history, people justified their actions through religion, saying that they were following God's word. Spengler agrees that religion is one of the core elements of each culture and he sees it as a necessity in life. Once a culture becomes a civilization, a human being has achieved their highest form. Due to the cyclical theory, Spengler believes that all civilizations will decline, sooner or later, and will be either reborn, or replaced by another civilization. Our Western civilization suffers from capitalism, which will ultimately destroy it. It is perfectly clear that people have progressed politically, socially, and economically, but they have become too focused on making money and obtaining material goods, while at the same time traditional values vanish. According to Spengler, Western civilization is slowly dying, and he wonders which civilization will replace it, and when. The civilization of Eloi and Morlocks is an image of the future civilization, but what is between the current Western civilization and the far-away future civilization of Eloi and Morlocks is unknown.

To detect the next proof of the Eloi's degeneration, one has to examine Time Traveller's thoughts upon his first encounter with the Eloi: "A queer thing I soon discovered about my little hosts, and that was their lack of interest. They would come to me with eager cries of astonishment, like children, but like children they would soon stop examining me and wander away after some other toy" (Wells 28). Now there are several proofs present about Eloi's decay, all of which direct the Time Traveller to conclude that the Eloi are not superior to humans at all. Their childish behaviour is in direct relation with their intellectual capacity which seems to be limited. This type of behaviour leaves the Time Traveller puzzled, but at the same time interested and engaged to further explore the new world. The next strange event further puzzles the Time Traveller: "It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange deficiency in these creatures, when I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly crying little thing which was drowning before their eyes" (Wells 42). For an ordinary human, the idea of leaving someone you know to drown is unthinkable.

While describing the lifestyle of the Eloi, Time Traveller realizes how simple and plain their daily life is: "They all spent all their time playing gently, in bathing in river, in making love in a half-playful fashion, in eating fruit and sleeping" (Wells 41). They live a hedonistic life, without any stress or problems, or at least it seems that way. What he later finds out is that the

Eloi are in constant fear, which is, in a way, contradictory to their previous description as creatures without emotions. We can observe this on the example of Weena, Time Traveller's friend, who shows a great deal of emotions throughout the novel: "However great their intellectual degeneration, the Eloi had kept too much of the human form not to claim my sympathy, and to make me perforce a sharer in their degradation and their Fear" (Wells 62). Weena shows traces of emotional superiority in comparison to other Eloi. At one moment, she even cries and Time Traveller comforts her because he recognizes some elements of humanity in her: "The too-perfect security of the Upperworlders had led them to a slow movement of degeneration, to a general dwindling in size, strength and intelligence" (Wells 49).

In the end, Time Traveller realizes how empty the Eloi's life is. He pities them because their life is without clear purpose. Their whole existence revolves around their simple daily routine without any shape of intellectual or moral improvement. What once seemed like a privileged race, soon will become the oppressed party in the new world, inhabited not only by the Eloi, but also by other creatures.

While spending time with the Eloi, Time Traveller realizes that they are acting strangely when the night falls. They are hiding and are not that active as they are during the day. At first he cannot understand their fear of darkness, until one encounter with a strange-shaped creature makes him feel slightly uncomfortable: "And up the hill I thought I could see ghosts. Three several times, as I scanned the slope, I saw white figures. Twice I fancied I saw a solitary white, ape-like creature running rather quickly up the hill, and once near the ruins I saw a leash of them carrying some dark body. They moved hastily" (Wells 44). Time Traveller continues to explore the new world and is fascinated with a little construction: "My attention was attracted by a pretty little structure, like a well under a cupola" (Wells 44). Little did he realize how important that structure is and what it is hiding underneath. Time Traveller sees the creature again, but now he provides the reader with a striking physical description of the creature's face: "A pair of eyes, luminous by reflection against the daylight without, was watching me out of the darkness" (Wells 45). He makes no contact with the new race, but it definitely ignites the Time Traveller's imagination.

During one such encounter, Time Traveller uses the matches to see the creature better, but the creature flees from the light: "Starting up in the darkness I snatched at my matches and,

hastily striking one, I saw-three stooping white creatures similar to the one I had seen above ground in the ruin, hastily retreating before the light” (Wells 53). At that moment the Time Traveller connects the dots and draws parallels to the physical appearance of the creatures and their departure: “Their eyes were abnormally large and sensitive, just as are the pupils of the abysmal fishes, and they reflected the light in the same way” (Wells 53). They are nocturnal creatures of the new world, with big eyes which allow them to see in the dark. It is logical to wonder where are those creatures during the daylight. Time Traveller again visits the small cupola and opens it. It leads underground and he concludes that it must be where the strange creatures are living: “Beneath my feet, then, the earth must be tunnelled enormously, and those tunnelling were habitat of the new race” (Wells 47). From that point on, Time Traveller becomes much more considerate towards the Eloi and the way they behave: “And now I understood to some slight degree at least the reason of the fear of the little Upperworld people for the dark” (Wells 57). These underground creatures are called Morlocks and the Time Traveller sees them not only as a threat and danger, but also as an additional mystery of the new world.

## **2. The question of race, gender and hierarchy in the new world**

In his work *A Modern Utopia*, Wells discusses race and gives his opinion on how people should stop dividing themselves in categories. Interestingly, he provides the reader with an extensive description of a man living in Utopia, but not a description of a woman. In his opinion, man in the future should be a sociologist who must lend himself to the development of aggregatory ideas that favour the civilising process. Also, he claims that a man refers himself to the tribe, that he is loyal to it, and that he fears or dislikes others outside the tribe. At this point, it is possible to draw the parallel with the next section of the chapter where he discusses race and gender with a botanist:

“But you would not like your daughter to marry a Chinaman or a negro?” “Of course”, said I, “when you say Chinaman, you think of a creature with a pigtail, long nails, and insanitary habits, and when you say negro, you think of a filthy-headed, black creature in

an old hat. You do this because your imagination is too feeble to disentangle the inherent qualities of a thing from its habitual associations.” (Wells 375)

Even in Utopia, people divide themselves in groups and create barriers between themselves based on pure stereotypes. Wells criticizes how people tend to generalize and judge massive groups of people just on grounds of being different from others. He emphasizes that in every such group, there will be members who may match the description and stereotypes, but the majority will not. Another interesting observation is that people do not generalize about the group they belong to, or their race, but rather see others as the problem and believe that in other races the disproportions are bigger and more noticeable. This just confirms the tribal nature of man who is afraid of anything different and unknown. He mentions women briefly, giving them full freedom by saying the following: “And you must remember a wife in Utopia is singularly not subject to her husband” (Wells, *A Modern Utopia* 377). The answer of his interlocutor is that everyone would cut her, and Wells responds very shortly: “This is Utopia!” (Wells, *A Modern Utopia* 377). Due to his Victorian perspective, even he himself does not believe that such an age will ever come, when women will be independent and equal to men. In conclusion of the chapter related to race, Wells synthesises his thoughts in the following sentence: “Synthesis does not necessarily mean fusion, nor does it mean uniformity” (Wells 379). Living together while respecting our differences without judgement is how we should live in order to erase all divisions made by men throughout the history. After all, maybe we do belong to different races, but we are all members of one species, and that we should have in mind.

Bloom (2005) makes a distinction between the genders by providing the traditional scheme of “masculine” and “feminine”. The values of the “masculine” are: culture, light, the Sun, law, reason, consciousness, the right hand, land, and rulership. The “feminine” merges with chaos, darkness, the Moon, intuition, feeling, the left hand, water, and the unconscious. By comparing the Eloi and Morlocks according to these characteristics, an interesting analysis emerges. Bloom starts the analysis with the Eloi, saying that they appear to be the only race at the beginning, and then, the superior of the two. The “masculine” traits of Eloi are rulership and the Sun. They seem to be happy, beautiful, and enjoying in leisure. However, upon closer inspection, they appear to be small, deficient in strength, afraid, intellectually underdeveloped, and ineffectual, what makes them not “masculine” enough to be considered as rulers. Although

they are feminized, they lack positive identity with the feminine. Morlocks are nocturnal creatures and are marked with symbolism of unconscious what corresponds to the “feminine”. On the other hand, they are aggressive, predator-like creatures, which somehow corresponds to “masculine” patterns. However, they are inferior in size to Time Traveller, and are extremely vulnerable. They cannot tolerate light at all, which makes them weak. We can easily conclude that both races have “masculine” and “feminine” traits and that there is no clear cut distinction between them (Bloom 41-42).

At first, Time Traveller is unaware of how this new society works. He believes that the Eloi represent the upper class, merely because of their elegance and prettiness. For Morlocks, on the other hand, he holds a belief that they are less important, and therefore working class: “So in the end, above ground you must have the Haves, pursuing pleasure and comfort, and beauty, and below ground the Have-nots, the Workers getting continually adapted to the conditions of their labour” (Wells 48). This social structure implies that the Eloi are the favoured class and that they rule over the lower working class. In this case, the Morlocks are considered to be the slaves of the Eloi which represent the Victorian idea of the Haves. This paradigm is denied during the night, when the social relationship of power changes and turns in favour of the Morlocks who occupy the role of the ruling class. Time Traveller thinks that this inconsistency and mutual dependency between the two races is the consequence of a possible revolution from the past. If the former theory about the distribution of power is correct, the Morlocks could have decided to stop the Eloi and raised their voice against the exploitation and uneven rights. The Morlocks are the providers in the society. Despite their appearance, they are much more productive than the Eloi: “And the Morlocks made their garments, I inferred, and maintained them in their habitual needs, perhaps through the survival of an old habit of service” (Wells 58).

It is easy to notice similarities between the society from the past and this new society. There is a numerous working class with few, or hardly any rights, and a few of those who are on the top of the hierarchy ruling the masses. This type of division is present in every culture and every civilization in the world's history. Moreover, the Eloi live off the labour of the Morlocks, while the latter live off the flesh of the former. We can conclude that they need each other to survive and that they depend on each other, so it is hard to say that either of those two races is superior to the other. John.S Partington in his essay “The Time Machine and A Modern Utopia:



The Static and Kinetic Utopias of the Early H.G. Wells” hypothesizes about the nature of human society in 802 701. Initially, he sees Eloi as the descendants of humanity in a pastoral communism; then he considers them the lords of a class-divided earth, holding the subterranean Morlocks in subjection; then he sees a class-divided society on the verge of a Morlockian uprising, and finally he recognises the Morlocks as the ascendant class who live beneath the Eloi, providing for them before consuming them in a cannibalistic feast (57-68).

### **3. Lifestyle and society in Wells’ future**

After introducing the creatures from the future, it is time to look deeper into their lifestyle and culture and compare it to the Western civilization. The first thing to notice is that people no longer live in houses and other buildings like people nowadays do: “I realized that there were no small houses to be seen. Apparently the single house, and possibly even household, had vanished” (Wells 29). Although it may seem like irrelevant information, this tells the reader a lot about the people from the future. For example, since there is not a single house, or any structure or building of that kind, they must be living in nature, in improvised shelters, on trees and similar. This way of life corresponds to the Stone Age where people were one with the nature. They acquired the necessary knowledge about the nature through their experience and they learnt by making mistakes and by imitating others. The Morlocks live in the wells, but they are deeply underground, so in a way, they also live in the nature: “A peculiar feature, which presently attracted my attention, was the presence of certain circular wells, several, as it seemed to me, of a very great depth. Sitting by the side of these wells, and peering down into the shafted darkness, I could see no gleam of water, nor could I start any reflection with a lighted match” (Wells 40). Living in the nature, although it may seem primitive and tribal, has its advantages.

The first one is crucial and that is life without forced consumption. This is crucial because many sociologists believe that consumerism is the sickness of our age. In the distant future, it seems that people do not perceive material things as we do. To be precise, they do not have any material possessions, which makes them different from us: “There were no signs of struggle, neither social nor economic struggle. The shop, the advertisement, traffic, all that commerce which constitutes the body of our world, was gone” (Wells 32). Material things for them have no value, and as a consequence, money does not exist either. Everything they have, they share in order to survive. If we compare their view on material possessions with the contemporary one,

one can immediately notice that our whole culture revolves around money. In such a consumerist age, *to have* means *to be*. People judge each other based on how much they have, where they live or how they are dressed. The most vulnerable demographics are teenagers who became so obsessed with material possessions that money became the measure according to which they choose who is worthy and who is not. The goal of an ordinary human today is to earn enough money to buy something material or invest in vacations. People no longer take jobs in which they enjoy, but rather those which will ensure them material stability. Parents encourage their children to give up on their dreams such as art or acting, saying that these jobs are insecure and that there is no money to be earned in that field. Our life choices, our life paths, and our happiness are sometimes determined by value and money. The Eloi and Morlocks are not familiar with that concept and it can be said that it represents degeneration and evolution at the same time. The former interpretation arises from our view of the history and the time when people lived in a community without much concern about material things, while the latter represents a possible result of the Western civilization's decline. Maybe after this civilization becomes history, people will start living as they have lived before, without so much concern for money. It is a step back in the past, but a step forward in the spiritual well-being of mankind. That being said, it is basically unthinkable today that there will be no private property in the future: "There were no hedges, no signs of property rights, no evidences of agriculture; the whole earth had become a garden" (Wells 30). It is hard to imagine people living together without labelling things as theirs, without having one's private space where one can be one's true self. People like to create barriers around themselves and distance themselves from other people, as they tend to define themselves as "not the Other", that is in opposition to or in distinction from others. Moreover, countless wars were fought for land and territory. Through land, people showed their dominance, power and it gave them recognition and honour. Imagining the world without private property and money seems like a utopia.

While the future mankind achieved certain things on one side, it lost something else on the other. The previous paragraph outlines all the advancements, but now, the paper takes a closer inspection on how people of the future became empty inside. For some unknown reason, their intelligence level has dropped. Also, the creatures from the future lack empathy and compassion for others: "It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange deficiency in these creatures, when I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly crying little

thing which was drowning before my eyes” (Wells 42). Emotional intelligence is not directly connected with the cognitive intelligence, so the reason for their emotional degradation is also unknown. Hypothetically, if in the future there is no money and private property, people should start taking care of each other and learn more about themselves because their life is not determined by material things. However, in the case of Eloi and Morlocks, this did not happen. It seems as if they have lost the purpose of life since they do not have a job; they do not have to think about money, and overall, it looks like they are living from day to day doing ordinary things which seems to make them unhappy, and there could be a logical reason for this. If we take into consideration that self-actualization is on the top of Maslow's pyramid of human needs, it makes sense. Usually, people achieve self-actualization while doing a certain job or activity that makes them happy and fulfilled (“Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs”). The level of happiness increases if they are paid for it as well. Since the Eloi and Morlocks do not work, and since their society is fairly simple and without structure, it is hard to achieve your highest potential. The emotional deficit and lack of compassion were caused by the new hierarchy and structure of society. It seems like values such as altruism, friendship, empathy and kindness have vanished. One shows a lack of interest when one is dissatisfied with oneself and ultimately it turns into apathy, and the mind-set drastically changes.

Although certain emotions are repressed, fear is still present in the future: “It was from her, too, that I learned that fear had not yet left the world. But she dreaded the dark, dreaded shadows, dreaded black things. Darkness to her was one thing dreadful” (Wells 43). Fear is one of six universal emotions which everybody recognizes. Among those six are: happiness, sadness, surprise, anger, disgust and fear (Ekman and Friesen). In an evolutionary sense, fear will probably never be overcome as it is crucial for human survival. People are afraid of the unknown and of the uncanny. Fear is inborn in every single creature and, even when people do not want to or should not be afraid, they cannot control the emotion of fear.

The next peculiar thing about the future is that there is no graves or graveyard: “I could see no crematoria nor anything suggestive of Tombs. But it occurred to me that, possibly, there might be cemeteries (or crematoria) somewhere beyond the range of my explorings” (Wells 41). The questions that arise are: What happens with the dead bodies? Do they preserve them in special locations? Do they burn them or use for particular cause? Is there any ritual with which

they honour the person such as funeral nowadays? All those questions are left unanswered until the reader learns that the Eloi are being eaten by the Morlocks and therefore there are no remains to be buried. This may also be one of the reasons why they feel so little compassion for one another, as they do not see any particular value in their lives and there is no need (or habit) to keep those who are gone in their memory. Despite the fact that they are being eaten, it does seem unusual that the Eloi lack any kind of ritual that they observe.

To illustrate why this is unusual, it is useful to look at Spengler's arguments. He highlights the importance of religion in every civilization: "As the essence of every Culture is religion, so – consequently – the essence of every Civilization is irreligion – the two words are synonymous" (Spengler 358). Interestingly, throughout the whole journey, Time Traveller does not mention religion or God. There are no traces of religious rituals, no mention of God or any type of divinity. It is possible that the people from the future are atheists and that they do not believe in the afterlife: "It is this extinction of inner living religiousness, which gradually tells upon even the most insignificant element in a man's being, that becomes phenomenal in the historical world-picture at the turn from the Culture to the Civilization, the time of change in which a mankind loses its spiritual fruitfulness for ever, and building takes the place of begetting" (Spengler 359).

The issue of religion is very controversial even today. In the course of history, the church's power and status were constantly changing. It is possible that somewhere in the future a breakpoint will happen and religion will become irrelevant, or it could just be one of many things that had vanished by the time of Eloi and Morlocks arrived, as did the concepts of money and private property. It can be concluded that all major values that constitute our lives somehow disappear: family, friendship, job, money, religion, politics, and so on. What is more, the whole culture of the future is very minimalistic. The Eloi and Morlocks are not interested in art of any kind and when reporting on his journey, Time Traveller does not mention culturally significant buildings such as galleries, libraries or theatres. The only buildings that do exist are in full decay and it is a matter of time when they will collapse. It is possible that the Eloi and Morlocks are not interested in art, history and learning due to their lack of interest in personal growth, but also due to the fact that they live knowing that they are simply food for the Morlocks. Their life is simple but boring, and they see themselves as having no other purpose but to be eaten. They live from

day to day without a specific goal and even without the desire to rebel and save themselves from the Morlocks, which is yet another proof of the degradation of mankind in the future.

#### **4. The final phase**

During his short stay in the future, Time Traveller notices that the nature has changed as well. The world does not look the same anymore. When people talk about the future and what life is going to look like, until recently people have largely envisaged robots, flying cars, superhumans, and similar. It is only in the last few decades that people think more about the nature and future well-being of our planet. It is clear that people nowadays are destroying the Earth and the process of destruction is occurring at an unpredictable rate. Time Traveller describes the futuristic nature, and the first thing that astonishes him is the sky: “Presently I noted that the sun belt swayed up and down, from solstice to solstice, in a minute or less, and that consequently my pace was over a year a minute; and minute by minute the white snow flashed across the world, and vanished, and was followed by the bright, brief green of spring” (Wells 20-21). He continues later on by saying: “All trace of moon had vanished. The circling of the stars, growing slower and slower, had given place to creeping points of light” (Wells 81). This shocks the Time Traveller since he could not predict or imagine what the future nature will look like. In the distant future, laws of nature are not the same as they are today: “The alternation of night and day grew slower and slower, and so did the passage of the sun across the sky, until they seemed to stretch through centuries” (Wells 81).

Though it may seem that Time Traveller is imagining things and that he is hallucinating due to the shock, it is more probable that our planet has changed. The Earth could have changed its route or the whole Solar System might have changed. Time Traveller notices how hot it is: “I think I have said how much hotter than our own was the weather of this Golden Age. It may be that the sun was hotter, or the Earth nearer the sun” (Wells 44-45). As any other scientist, he wants to know more. He sets himself further into the future again to see if anything has changed. This time he does not meet the Eloi and Morlocks. The only living creature that he sees is a giant crab: “I moved on a hundred years, and there was the same red sun – a little larger, a little duller – the same dying sea, the same chill air, and the same crowd of earthly crustacea creeping in and

out among the green weed and the red rocks” (Wells 84). The only living creatures who resemble people had vanished: “Yet one could argue upon good textual evidence that in this story the day of man has ended, the individual has died, and Man is already dead” (Prince 543).

The Elysian world is devoid of animals, except for a few sparrows and butterflies. IN his paper, Eisenstein concludes that if butterflies prosper above, in the world of flowers, then centipedes should thrive below (“*The Time Machine and the End of Man*”). Pasquini suggests that the Time Traveller has found himself in a wasting world: “The Time Traveller – the last survivor and anachronistic remnant of Homo sapiens – quickly arrives at the realization that his human form is the prototype rather than the type. He senses himself as ‘an old world savage animal’ in the midst of unusual fauna” (49). The Earth is portrayed as a dead planet. Wells sends a warning to the mankind about the potential danger which awaits people if they do not change the way they live: “The evidence of Victorian remains in the future and the Time Traveller’s philosophical attitude about human destiny suggest his story to be more a warning to his listeners than an actual account of society in the year 802 701” (Partington 58). To him, the way humans live will probably lead to the ultimate destruction of mankind and nature: “It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of the sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives – all that was over” (Wells 85).

The decay of mankind can also be analysed through the riddle of the Sphinx. The original, mythological riddle of the Sphinx centres on an analogy between a solar day and the duration of an individual human life: in the morning (infancy) man “walks” on four legs – he crawls; at mid-day (adulthood) he walks on two legs, and in the evening (old age) on three – by using a cane. The meaning of this riddle can be extended to the entirety of human evolution. The ultimate, third stage is the stage of decay and it represents the life of the future mankind. It is not only mankind that is declining, but also the humanity along with it.

## Conclusion

*The Time Machine* is just one of many novels based on time travelling. In his critical approach, Wells analyses the lives of the creatures from the future, and the knowledge about the new world shocks him. Believing that creatures from the future will be extremely intelligent and more advanced than him and his contemporaries, Time Traveller investigates the characteristics of the Eloi and Morlocks. It seems that over time, people as a race are affected by both evolution and devolution. There is no gender and sex, people look alike and are not very intelligent. On the other hand, there is no private property, money, religion or politics. The Earth itself has passed through various stages and the planet that the Time Traveller knows does not exist. The easiest way to describe the future would be the world of wasteland and humans' spiritual emptiness. The living creatures had declined in all their aspects, and values such as family, friendship and tradition have perished. This novel can be interpreted as a warning and as a critique of contemporary society. According to Wells and Spengler, consumerism and Western lifestyle destroy our civilization and it is necessary to change something if people want to avoid the future similar to what is depicted in the novel. Despite that, people do not know what will happen and what the world will look like in 802 701. People can only make assumptions about that, just like many scientists and writers do in their work.

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