

# "Society and the Role of Technology in H.G. Wells's "The Time Machine" and A. Huxley's "Brave New World"

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

Darko Paradžiković

**Društvo i tehnologija u romanima "Vremeplov" H. G. Wellsa i  
"Vrli novi svijet" A. Huxleyja**

Završni rad

Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Ljubica Matek

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## **Abstract**

Through comparative interpretation, this paper aims to analyze a number of points concerning human social life and technology as they are touched upon in Herbert George Wells's *The Time Machine* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. The paper observes H. G. Wells's and A. Huxley's political and private lives, as the two not only stand out as key creators of utopian and dystopian fiction that were inspired by contemporary events and wrote about similar topics, but also had strong opinions regarding one another during their lifetimes. This analysis of the authors' lives helps to give context to key motivations behind the creation of the two novels, as well as to portray essential features, similarities and differences between them, notably the authors' common criticism of capitalism and industrialization. Primarily, the paper is concerned with the social arrangements present in the two works' respective worlds, the roles that the protagonists play in the stories, as well as leisure activities that inhabitants of the future worlds engage in. The paper further discusses the function and state of technology and machinery present in the two future societies, as well as the role that technology played in establishing the aforementioned social systems, and finally, the paper delves into the state of humanity, ecology and animal life as portrayed by the two works.

Keywords: Herbert George Wells, Aldous Huxley, *The Time Machine*, *Brave New World*, society, technology, humanity.

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## Introduction

Two seminal works of science fiction that have withstood the test of time – Herbert George Wells’s novella *The Time Machine*, and Aldous Huxley’s novel *Brave New World* – each portray vivid images of an Earth in the future, not entirely unfamiliar, but instead strangely uncanny in design and application. While the blend of concrete science and imaginative fiction serves as a foundation for both of these works, their true weight lies in the detailed social structures, or criticisms thereof, that serve as a backbone for the creative storytelling and worldbuilding. Naturally, a view into each of the authors’ lives should elucidate their inspirations or reasons for weaving such intricate social systems into these works – and this view shall also show how Wells’s and Huxley’s lives were, perhaps, destined to become intertwined, even before Aldous Huxley himself had been born.

The goal of this paper will be primarily to interpret the contrasts, similarities, and differences present between *The Time Machine* and *Brave New World* in regards to society and societal systems or classes, the roles that the stories’ protagonists play and the emotions that they experience, as well as human life and daily activities.

Further, the paper will analyze the role that technology plays in each of the stories, to what level it has progressed in the stories’ respective worlds, what the authors’ thoughts on this particular subject seem to be, as well as compare how two completely differing resolutions on the matter of technology both seem to have brought about superficially favorable results for the primary inhabitants of each world.

Finally, the paper shall deliberate on the broader impact that the stories’ respective human actions – or lack thereof – have brought to their worlds, and the impact of human agency on ecology and all other living species. This particular topic will be approached both from a literal and practical standpoint, in a very narrow sense, as well as more figuratively and philosophically, in a broad sense that will bring into question the humanity of all but a few humans that appear between the two works.



## 1. On Wells and Huxley

“Born into a struggling lower-middle-class family on September 21, 1866” (Partington, “H. G. Wells: A Political Life” 517), Herbert George Wells is remembered today as “the father of science fiction”, an outspoken socialist, as well as a man ever-hopeful about the prospects that constantly developing technology and political ideas held for the future of mankind. For a short period in 1877, as Stiles notes in “Literature in Mind: H. G. Wells and the Evolution of the Mad Scientist”, “thanks to a prestigious government scholarship to attend the Normal School Science in South Kensington” (319), Wells studied biology under the tutelage of the famous “Darwin’s bulldog.” His mentor’s interpretations of Darwin’s theory of evolution, eugenics, and in particular, “the inherent brutality of natural selection” (Stiles 319) left a deep mark on Wells. Around the same time, Wells took up amateur journalism, “and got involved in London socialist politics” (Partington, “H. G. Wells: A Political Life” 517), becoming an active member of the School Debating Society, and attending meetings of the Fabian Society. Despite numerous fallings-out with other English socialists, Wells would maintain that his “ultimate hope was for a socialist world where Europe would develop out of a dying capitalism along social democratic lines, Russia would liberalise its rigid Communism, and the two spheres would find a common socialist ground” (Partington, “H. G. Wells: A Political Life” 548). Unfortunately, this dream would be shattered by Stalin’s expanded authoritarian rule in the USSR. Nonetheless, Wells stands out as the man who expanded the idea of socialism beyond economic questions alone, pushed human rights into the forefront of contemporary political thought in the United Kingdom and beyond, as well as the one who proposed that nationalistic ideologies should be dealt away with in order to bring about a world government of sorts, inspiring the creation of such multinational organizations as the United Nations.

Aldous Huxley was born in 1894, as one biographer put it, “‘by birth and disposition’ into England’s intellectual aristocracy” (“Aldous Huxley” 2). Huxley was as contemplative and scientifically-disposed in his childhood as he was in his later years, but at the age of seventeen he was “afflicted with a disease of the eyes that for several months left him actually and completely blind” (Derbyshire 15). Huxley’s eyesight would never entirely recover, and he would opt for the career of a journalist and writer instead of a doctor, eventually even becoming a screenwriter in spite of his impairment. Above all, it should be noted that “Huxley was raised in a family that took intellectual inquiry very seriously indeed, he maintained a lifelong interest in science, and he treated the religious instinct with utmost respect” (Derbyshire 14). Politically, he aligned himself with social democracy and the pacifist movement. At a glance, many of his works may seem

inspired by Wells's own writings – dealing with the topics of utopia and dystopia, as well as social change and science fiction. By the 1950s, Huxley had taken to experimentation with mind-altering drugs such as mescaline and LSD, illustrating these psychedelic experiences in a number of his works. Aldous's brother Julian warns, however, that these experiments were not intended to spark the counter-culture that they inevitably did: "One of Aldous's major preoccupations was how to achieve self-transcendence while yet remaining a committed social being" ("Aldous Huxley" 7).

As contemporaries and fellow countrymen concerned with similar topics and with similar political dispositions, one would imagine Herbert George Wells and Aldous Huxley to have enjoyed a friendly relationship despite the generational gap between them. The connection between the two, in fact, spans back to Wells's time at the Normal School of Science – his aforementioned mentor, "Darwin's bulldog", was none other than Thomas H. Huxley, Aldous Huxley's grandfather (Partington, "H. G. Wells: A Political Life" 518). Nonetheless, a rift emerged between the two with Huxley's publishing of *Brave New World*, where Huxley took no "special pains to hide that he was, among other things, blasting Wells. On the contrary, Wells is one of only two contemporary writers to be mentioned by name in the novel thinly disguised as 'Dr. Wells'" (Firchow, "Wells and Lawrence in Huxley's *Brave New World*" 260). Later on, and quite possibly referring to *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley "named Wells's *Men Like Gods* (1923) as the inspiration for a parody which later 'got out of hand and turned into something quite different from what I intended'" (Firchow, "Wells and Lawrence in Huxley's *Brave New World*" 261). Wells took Huxley's parody as an insult, "blustering about Huxley's 'betrayal' of the future" (Firchow, "Wells and Lawrence in Huxley's *Brave New World*" 261), and continuing to criticize, even as late as 1940, Huxley's depressing prospects for the world, as well as the fact that he was unjustly branded one of the grim future world's architects.

Nonetheless, Wells himself was not always so optimistic in his works, especially during the early years of his writing, nor was he a man ignorant to the dangers of science and technology. *The Time Machine*, one of his earliest stories, written in 1895, in which he "draws a remarkable portrait of man's eventual degeneration and extinction" (Firchow, "Wells and Lawrence in Huxley's *Brave New World*" 262), shares many common features with Huxley's *Brave New World* indeed. The key similarity between the two appears to be their criticism of capitalism, which both stories exacerbate nearly to the point of parody. Huxley's primary misgivings with Wells, then, seem to have been that "he is unrealistic, that his estimate of human nature is completely out of whack, and that his prophecies about the future are therefore dangerously misleading" (Firchow, "Wells and Lawrence in Huxley's *Brave New World*" 264) – as Huxley stays true to the scientific

method in his works through and through in order to illustrate clear, intricately detailed systems and structures of dystopia, unlike Wells, who in many of his stories chooses at some point to rely on imagination and vague concepts to grasp the reader's interest and criticize the contemporary system of government.

## **2. Comparison of societal hierarchies**

As social commentary and criticism lies at the heart of both of these stories, each must be analyzed thoroughly in order for comparisons to be made. Wells and Huxley both utilized the scientific method, deduction, and delayed decoding, “a term invented by Ian Watt to identify a kind of description in which sense impressions are relayed to the reader without being immediately named and explained” (Hovanec 464), in order to create worlds at once both strikingly similar to and yet utterly different from each other.

### **2.1. The arcadian world of A.D. 802,701**

Although *The Time Machine* begins with a framing narrative elaborated by an unnamed narrator in the Time Traveller's house in late nineteenth century England, it can be said that the story proper, as well as the most developed social commentary in it, only begins once the Time Traveller begins to retell the journey of his travels through time. Emerging from his time machine on his first destination in the future, the Time Traveller at first believes to have “arrived at a pastoral communism” (Partington, “*The Time Machine and A Modern Utopia*” 57), observing the lack of personal property in the world, and the fact that all of the short, human-like creatures that had appeared before him, which he had dubbed the Eloi, “all had the same form of costume, the same soft hairless visage, and the same girlish rotundity of limb” (Wells 24-25). The Time Traveller goes on to observe “mankind housed in splendid shelters, gloriously clothed, and yet as I had found them engaged in no toil. There were no signs of struggle, neither social nor economical struggle. [...] The difficulty of increasing population had been met, I guessed, and population had ceased to increase” (Wells 27), believing this to be the end result of humankind completely subjugating nature to its will.

Nonetheless, this is where a crucial difference between *The Time Machine* and contemporary utopian fiction – to which Wells himself also contributed – emerges. The Time Traveller tells only the story from his perspective, not as an all-knowing narrator, and admits to the issue of having to

explore a world on his own, rather than having all the information conveniently presented: “In some of these visions of Utopias and coming times which I have read, there is a vast amount of detail about building, and social arrangements, and so forth. But while such details are easy enough to obtain when the whole world is contained in one’s imagination, they are altogether inaccessible to a real traveller amid such realities as I found here” (Wells 34). As Firchow notes in “H. G. Wells's *Time Machine*: In Search of Time Future—And Time past”, “The Time Traveller’s understanding of the future is solely based on his deductions” (127). It is through this key feature of storytelling that the true nature of the future’s social arrangement is revealed: with the introduction of the subterranean creatures, the so-called Morlocks which prey upon the Eloi, the Time Traveller deduces that the world is, in fact, the end conclusion of a hyper-industrialized and capitalist society instead, applying Darwinist principles to the subterranean, former-working-class beasts:

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. Once they were there, they would no doubt have to pay rent, and not a little of it, for the ventilation of their caverns; and if they refused, they would starve or be suffocated for arrears. Such of them as were so constituted as to be miserable and rebellious would die; and, in the end, the balance being permanent, the survivors would become as well adapted to the conditions of underground life, and as happy in their way, as the Upper-world people were to theirs. (Wells 41-42)

In this sense, the intent of Wells’s creation of this future social system is made transparent: *The Time Machine* serves primarily as a cautionary tale against the abusive and exploitative nature of Victorian-era capitalism that grew rampant in Wells’s time, as well as a warning against the dangers of complacency in comfort. Wells also does not stop at merely applying Darwinist principles to the future – his Time Traveller is deeply concerned with issues of morality and humanity, believing “Hardship and freedom”, rather than the whims and rules of nature, to be the “conditions under which the active, strong, and subtle survive and the weaker go to the wall” (Wells 27). Contemporary Darwinists suggested that human morality and motivation were derived from evolution rather than society, but even in spite of T. H. Huxley’s influence, Wells seems to have disagreed, further indicated by his own “gradual shift toward progressionism and utopia” (Gomel 339) as he grew older.

## 2.2. The dystopian World State of A.F. 632

In stark contrast to *The Time Machine*'s adventurous and bright opening scenes full of wonder, Huxley's *Brave New World* opens with an utterly somber depiction of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, where the same situation of population control that Wells briefly touched upon is solved in an altogether different way, dubbed "Bokanovsky's Process": "One egg, one embryo, one adult – normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 6). Huxley, thus, makes his fascination with eugenics and population control completely overt from the very beginning of the story. Eugenics itself, at the time, was "linked to the notion of the scientific planning of society, and scientific planning was thought to have the same relationship to the state as eugenics did to the individual" (Congdon 85). Bokanovsky's Process would allow the World State to produce thousands of productive, identical "twins" in vitro, made for the sole purpose of manning factories, operating machines, or performing menial tasks.

And yet it should be immediately clear that the whole world cannot be run with factory workers, servants, and janitors alone. Who, then, acts as a ruling class in this society? The question is answered soon, along with vivid imagery of "Neo-Pavlovian" conditioning and caste division that occurs from the youngest age in this society, through the recording of a conditioning speech akin to a mantra:

Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly color. I'm so glad I'm a Beta. (Huxley, *Brave New World* 27-28)

The Alphas, then, make up the leading caste of bureaucrats, scientists, and doctors of the World State. They are assisted and admired by the subservient Betas. These two classes are also spared from Bokanovsky's Process, in order to ensure that their intellectual capacities are not damaged by the invasive nature of it – and it is worth to mention that any embryo besides Alpha ones is also damaged by limiting oxygen supply during its development, to ensure hierarchy in both the physical sense as well as the social one. This shows Huxley's family background – the teachings of "Darwin's bulldog" and principles of the "survival of the fittest" resound, but are given a twist

by Aldous's own belief that through science, humans can subject nature, and even other humans, to their will completely.

Matthew J. Franck deftly traces the political arrangement of *Brave New World* back to Plato's *Republic*. Within it, Franck reminds us, Socrates poses the question: "Have we any greater evil for a city than what splits it and makes it many instead of one? Or a greater good than what binds it together and makes it one?" (74). Indeed, the World State functions as a global one-world government. Even the caste arrangement of the social classes seems to correspond to Socrates' vision: "As Plato's Socrates divides his city into three classes—the golden guardians, the silver auxiliaries, and the iron or bronze farmers and artisans—Huxley's World State has the five classes of Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon" (Franck 75). Even the question of eugenics and the raising of children resounds strongly between the two works:

Socrates recognizes that he cannot keep his classes differentiated—hence he cannot keep the city stable—without keeping a "careful... watch" over the children born to the parents in each class, transferring up and down the social scale those children who are better fitted to be reared in another class than the one into which they were born. Ultimately, with respect to the gold class, Socrates opts for a concerted eugenics program that involves the destruction of marriage and the family and the concealment of every child's peculiar parentage, with childrearing handed over to a common nursery. (Franck 75)

*Brave New World's* World State not only adapts the idea of a common nursery and child-raising system, but ingeniously amplifies it with the application of mass in vitro fertilization, physical and genetic manipulation of embryos, and lifelong conditioning that keeps each individual exactly in the caste they were created to be in, generally allowing for no social mobility.

*Brave New World's* system seems to be in part inspired by ideals of the USSR in the early twentieth century. Namely, the thoughts and ideals born as a consequence of the USSR's rapid industrialization and implementation of a new form of government – in particular those relating to eugenics projects and population control – are very similar to the one in Huxley's work. As Bardziński points out, quoting Fritzsche and Hellbeck on the topic of the "New Soviet Man", "It was the writer Maxim Gorky who more than any other individual thinker contributed to the contours and the meaning of the Stalinist New Man. (...) [He] endowed the New Man with two traits: Heroism and collectivism" (67). This corresponds to yet another conditioning mantra of the World State – "Every one works for every one else. We can't do without any one. Even Epsilons are useful. We couldn't do without Epsilons. Every one works for every one else" (Huxley, *Brave*

*New World* 74). “Collectivism” seems to be the key word here, as every citizen of the World State is expected to be completely selfless and work for the sake of the other. And yet, in contrast to the working class’s selflessness, further similarity can be found when comparing the Alpha ruling class of the World State to the Soviet “Nomenklatura” – a ruling class of bureaucrats and intellectuals elected to power by the Communist Party, according to Joseph Stalin’s design (“Nomenklatura”).

Huxley further underlines his belief in the necessity for a strong ruling class in an ironic set-up where he contrasts the World State with the New Mexico Savage Reservation of Malpais. Malpais generally serves as a stark contrast to the civilized world as they know it, and utterly shocks Bernard and Lenina, World State citizens who visit it on vacation. Bernard remarks about the pueblo that he feels “[a]s though we were living on different planets, in different centuries. A mother, and all this dirt, and gods, and old age, and disease... It’s almost inconceivable” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 123). But even in spite of this, Huxley still makes his point about social control clear through the image of this small village led by elders and mystics: “To ensure stability, the ultimate control of a society must be vested in a very few hands, a condition which is true not merely of the stable Fordian state but also of the stable Pueblo Indian community” (Firchow, “Wells and Lawrence in Huxley’s *Brave New World*” 264-265).

Though not in direct relation to *The Time Machine*, the World State’s organizational structures also serve as a harsh criticism to and underline key issues in Wells’s more idealistic, utopian works – as Peter Firchow points out in “Wells and Lawrence in Huxley’s “Brave New World”, quoting Huxley’s own *Proper Studies*:

If, by means of genetic control and artificial selection, as in *Men Like Gods*, "every individual is capable of playing the superior part, who will consent," Huxley asked in *Proper Studies*, "or be content to do the dirty work and obey? The inhabitants of Mr. Wells's numerous utopias solve the problem by ruling and being ruled, doing high-brow and low-brow work, in turns... an admirable state of affairs if could be arranged... though personally, I find my faith too weak." If men could be bred into gods, Huxley argued, they would also quarrel like gods, with a consequent and ineluctable Gotterdammerung. [...] "States function as smoothly as they do," Huxley concludes, "because the greater part of the population is not very intelligent, dreads responsibility, and desires nothing better than to be told what to do.... A state with a population consisting of nothing but these superior people could not hope to last for a year. (263)

Huxley even exemplifies this particular point in *Brave New World* with a recount of the Cyprus Experiment – as the island was “cleared of all its existing inhabitants and re-colonized with a specially prepared batch of twenty-two thousand Alphas” (*Brave New World* 223). Within six years, with agricultural work being poorly performed, and the “working class” of Alphas constantly going on strike while the “ruling class” refused to give them an inch, a civil war broke out. Of the initial population of twenty-two thousand, nineteen thousand Alphas had died. The rest unanimously petitioned for the World State to re-assume government of the island, and welcomed a return to the hierarchically structured system.

In *Brave New World Revisited*, Aldous Huxley touches upon the topic of democracy and voluntary government, illustrating the necessary conditions for the formation of such a form of government, and the conditions in which such a form of government may deteriorate, or, in the worst-case scenario, be given up on by the people themselves:

Given a fair chance, human beings can govern themselves, and govern themselves better, though perhaps with less mechanical efficiency, than they can be governed by "authorities independent of their will." Given a fair chance, I repeat; for the fair chance is an indispensable prerequisite. No people that passes abruptly from a state of subservience under the rule of a despot to the completely unfamiliar state of political independence can be said to have a fair chance of making democratic institutions work. Again, no people in a precarious economic condition has a fair chance of being able to govern itself democratically. Liberalism flourishes in an atmosphere of prosperity and declines as declining prosperity makes it necessary for the government to intervene ever more frequently and drastically in the affairs of its subjects. Over-population and over-organization are two conditions which, as I have already pointed out, deprive a society of a fair chance of making democratic institutions work effectively. (Huxley)

It is safe to assume, then, that the reality of *Brave New World* is one where the “fair chance” is taken away – through a series of civil uprisings and wars that took place prior to the formation of the World State. The Controller, Mustafa Mond, elaborates near the end just how the population of the entire world was more than happy to give up their right to self-government:

Right up to the time of the Nine Years' War. That made them change their tune all right. What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? That was when science first began to be controlled-after the Nine Years' War. People were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. [...] One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for. (Huxley, *Brave New World* 228)



Finally, Aldous Huxley commented on George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*, released 17 years after *Brave New World*, asserting why he believes that his own brand of dystopia is the more threatening and likely one in the long run: "Whether in actual fact the policy of the boot-on-the-face can go on indefinitely seems doubtful. My own belief is that the ruling oligarchy will find less arduous and wasteful ways of governing and of satisfying its lust for power, and these ways will resemble those which I described in *Brave New World*" ("A Letter to George Orwell"). Huxley believes that comfort and safety – rather than coercion and violence – will be the factors that will make the civilized world give up its freedoms, and his words ring true even today.

### **3. The protagonists**

The case of the protagonists is yet another where *The Time Machine* displays similar concepts and ideas executed in wildly different ways. Because of the framing narrative of *The Time Machine*, readers might initially get the impression that the unnamed narrator would be the story's protagonist, but this is soon proven false as the Time Traveller begins to recount his tale. Similarly, *Brave New World's* insecure Bernard Marx is initially the most likely candidate to be given the title of protagonist in Huxley's novel because of how much focus he is given in its first half, but Bernard makes way for the far more interesting "Savage" the moment the latter is introduced into the story.

#### **3.1. The Time Traveller**

The unnamed narrator is the first to give an account of the Time Traveller, portraying him as a crafty and intelligent man: "the Time Traveller was one of those men who are too clever to be believed: you never felt that you saw all around him; you always suspected some subtle reserve, some ingenuity in ambush, behind his lucid frankness" (Wells 10). The narrator also seems to underline a consensus of mistrust between all the men gathered at his house's meetings, exactly because of the Time Traveller's aforementioned craftiness: "the Time Traveller had more than a touch of whim among his elements, and we distrusted him. Things that would have made the fame of a less clever man seemed tricks in his hands" (Wells 11). And yet, when the Time Traveller shows them the miniature time machine, the men's own senses confirm that, in fact, it appears to vanish: "the little machine suddenly swung round, became indistinct, was seen as a ghost for a second perhaps, as an eddy of faintly glittering brass and ivory; and it was gone – vanished!"

(Wells 8). This, to the reader, establishes him as a trustworthy character, despite continuing protests from most of the observers of the experiment.

Human senses are not infallible, however, as Caroline Hovanec suggests in “Rereading H. G. Wells’s *The Time Machine: Empiricism, Aestheticism, Modernism*”, noting that “Psychological states [...] play a role in perception, affecting the body in multiple ways. Fear, especially, affects the Time Traveller’s sensory experiences” (468). This is where delayed decoding comes into play, as Wells seems to establish the sense of trust in the senses so early on in the story only to tear it down as the journey progresses. Hovanec goes on to say the following, quoting a passage from the novella:

These psychological states continue to distort the scientifically minded Time Traveller’s observations of the future world, for example, when he pursues the Morlocks into their underground cavern, from which he effects a narrow escape: “I got over the well-mouth somehow, and staggered out of the ruin into the blinding sunlight. I fell upon my face. Even the soil smelt sweet and clean. Then I remember Weena kissing my hands and ears, and the voices of others among the Eloi. Then, for a time, I was insensible.” (469)

In spite of his application of observation and deduction, as well as keen intellect, the Time Traveller otherwise appears to be a perfectly average man, susceptible to shock and horror that reveals itself in the future world the further and deeper he ventures into it. Human senses can be fooled, or even cease to register information, in situations of extreme shock. For this reason, the protagonist of *The Time Machine* can be interpreted as a trustworthy *character*, but due to the lapses in his memory caused by shock and fatigue, should not be taken as an example of an entirely reliable *narrator*.

### **3.2. *Brave New World*’s “heroes” and their motivations**

Unlike *The Time Machine*’s first-person narration, *Brave New World* is presented through the perspective of an omniscient third person narrator. This makes it easier to unpack and process its characters’ thoughts, feelings and experiences. *Brave New World* features a host of characters that reveal facets about how this perfectly-controlled world functions, but two male characters – one a citizen, and the other a reservation “savage” – stand out as characters central to the focus and progression of the plot, and provide the most material for analysis.

The first of these two men, an Alpha-Plus psychologist at the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, Bernard Marx, is a complex-ridden citizen who does not entirely fit into the frame of an ideal, normative and obedient member of society. And it should come as no surprise, seeing as Bernard is the target of gossip and rumors, brought about by a physical inadequacy, being eight centimeters shorter than other Alphas. This even affects his attitude towards other people, especially towards those of the lower castes:

Bernard gave his orders in the sharp, rather arrogant and even offensive tone of one who does not feel himself too secure in his superiority. To have dealings with members of the lower castes was always, for Bernard, a most distressing experience. For whatever the cause (and the current gossip about the alcohol in his blood-surrogate may very likely-for accidents will happen-have been true) Bernard's physique as hardly better than that of the average Gamma. He stood eight centimetres short of the standard Alpha height and was slender in proportion. Contact with members of the lower castes always reminded him painfully of this physical inadequacy. (Huxley, *Brave New World* 64)

With an acutely-developed sense of self-consciousness, Bernard is a rather poor fit for the selfless and hedonistic society that he lives in. He often comes into conflict with his temporary partner, the Beta Lenina Crowe, from whom he'd hoped he would be able to receive more than just physical pleasure and sex. However, Lenina senselessly parrots on the mantras of her conditioning whenever Bernard, in one of his emotional outbursts, challenges the foundations of life that she is perfectly comfortable with:

"I want to know what passion is," she heard him saying. "I want to feel something strongly."

"When the individual feels, the community reels," Lenina pronounced.

"Well, why shouldn't it reel a bit?"

"Bernard!"

But Bernard remained unabashed. (Huxley, *Brave New World* 94)

As Bernard plans a vacation with Lenina in a New Mexico Savage Reservation, he receives a very concrete threat from his direct superior, the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning: "If ever I hear again of any lapse from a proper standard of infantile decorum, I shall ask for your transference to a Sub-Centre – preferably to Iceland" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 98). Seemingly unphased by this threat and brimming with bravado, Bernard meets one last time with his friend Helmholtz Watson – an otherwise perfectly normative Alpha who also exudes a desire for

something beyond the shallow pleasures that the World State offers, before embarking on the trip to New Mexico.

Upon arriving at the New Mexico Reservation, Bernard and Lenina witness a Native-American sacrificial flagellation ceremony, conducted for the purpose of calling forth rain. It is at the end of this ceremony that they meet “The Savage” – a man bearing a strikingly unique appearance among all the other Native Americans: “The dress of the young man who now stepped out on to the terrace was Indian; but his plaited hair was straw-coloured, his eyes a pale blue, and his skin a white skin, bronzed” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 116). The Savage regrets not being allowed to play the role of the sacrifice and to be on the receiving end of the whip, claiming that “They would have had twice as much blood” from him (Huxley, *Brave New World* 117). Lenina is utterly baffled by his statements and wonder why he wishes for something like that, and the only reply he provides is – “to show that I’m a man...” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 117) – hinting at a desire to prove his worth.

At last, the young man is introduced as John, the son of Linda, a Beta woman who had been left behind on a trip years ago. Bernard and Lenina are also introduced to Linda, and Bernard is as fascinated by John’s stories as Lenina is disgusted by Linda’s state. Parts of John’s story bear a striking resemblance to Bernard’s up to this point – he notes that others living in the pueblo had always “disliked me for my complexion” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 117), and he is shown to have contemplative thoughts regarding life, beauty, and freedom that rival Bernard’s own. Through John’s story, Bernard deduces that John is, in fact, the illegitimate son of the Director, to whom John refers as “Tomakin' '(Yes, 'Thomas' was the D.H.C.’s first name.)” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 118), and uses this as leverage against his superior, bringing both John and Linda into London on the return trip to embarrass the Director. Upon meeting Linda and John, the Director is subject to mocking laughter from everyone present at the facility, and “the poor man had resigned immediately afterwards and never set foot in the Centre again” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 153). For what to John was elation and excitement in meeting his father at last was something altogether different to the citizens of London – being called someone’s father was, in this world, a funny and disgraceful moniker, bordering on insult. Following this event, Bernard starts to abuse the people’s fascination with John to further his own social standing, resulting in him becoming little more than a leech. John’s story and characterization are far from over at this point, though.

John’s relationship with Lenina is worth attention for its paradoxical nature, as John is at first glance completely entranced by Lenina’s body, and the physical attraction is mutual: “He had seen,

for the first time in his life, the face of a girl whose cheeks were not the colour of chocolate or dogskin, whose hair was auburn and permanently waved, and whose expression (amazing novelty!) was one of benevolent interest. Lenina was smiling at him; such a nice-looking boy, she was thinking, and a really beautiful body” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 117). As someone who grew up reading almost exclusively Shakespeare’s works, John begins to equate Lenina with *Romeo and Juliet’s* titular heroine. And yet, despite the numerous chances he receives to become physically intimate with her, John maintains restraint. Eventually, he becomes disgusted with a “feelie” (a sort of sensory feature-length film that stimulates all the senses, in particular the sense of touch) that they take in together, commenting that “It was base, [...] it was ignoble” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 170). John at last becomes utterly sickened by Lenina’s advances in an episode where she unabashedly attempts to sleep with him. With his traditional Native-American upbringing which implies that a man “must do something first [...] to show that [he is] worthy” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 189) of a woman’s company, her unconditional willingness to sleep with him only serves to enrage him, even going so far as threatening to kill her, quoting Shakespeare’s Othello to make sense of the situation: “O thou weed, who are so lovely fair and smell’st so sweet that the sense aches at thee. Was this most goodly book made to write ‘whore’ upon?” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 195). His illusions of the “brave new world” are subsequently completely shattered as he witnesses “death-conditioning” taking place around his mother’s deathbed, and he disturbs a soma distribution event together with Helmholtz and Bernard, resulting in their arrest.

As they are brought before the Resident Controller of Western Europe, Mustafa Mond, the four men engage in enlightening conversations regarding the state of the world. At last, Bernard and Helmholtz’s punishment is revealed: they would be exiled to an island filled with other free thinkers and others who could not fit into the World State’s system. The exile could, however, be interpreted as more of a blessing than a punishment, as Mustafa Mond explains:

He’s being sent to an island. That’s to say, he’s being sent to a place where he’ll meet the most interesting set of men and women to be found anywhere in the world. All the people who, for one reason or another, have got too self-consciously individual to fit into community-life. All the people who aren’t satisfied with orthodoxy, who’ve got independent ideas of their own. Every one, in a word, who’s any one. (Huxley, *Brave New World* 227)

The Savage John, however, is not granted the privilege, and is forced to stay for the sake of his observation experiment, but not before *claiming* something very specific and contrary to the entire system of the World State before one of its very Controllers:

“But I don’t want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin.”

“In fact,” said Mustapha Mond, “you’re claiming the right to be unhappy.”

“All right then,” said the Savage defiantly, “I’m claiming the right to be unhappy.”

“Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind.” There was a long silence.

“I claim them all,” said the Savage at last. (Huxley, *Brave New World* 240)

In his final days, the reader sees John attempting to isolate himself from society, engaging in ritual vomiting and self-flagellation, until at last he is unwillingly drawn into an orgy with hundreds of participants who had come to observe the spectacle of the Savage. At the very end, Huxley applies the technique of delayed decoding, similar to Wells, to lay bare the Savage’s fate:

Through an archway on the further side of the room they could see the bottom of the staircase that led up to the higher floors. Just under the crown of the arch dangled a pair of feet. [...] Slowly, very slowly, like two unhurried compass needles, the feet turned towards the right; north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-south-west; then paused, and, after a few seconds, turned as unhurriedly back towards the left. South-south-west, south, south-east, east... (Huxley, *Brave New World* 259)

#### **4. Human activity, leisure and relaxation**

Different societies proscribe and encourage different leisure activities for their members, and this is yet another case through which *The Time Machine* and *Brave New World* can be compared. To illustrate the importance of leisure time, Mark Neocleous quotes Karl Marx, who elaborated on the conditions of capitalist production: “By extending the working day, therefore, capitalist production... not only produces a deterioration of human labour-power by robbing it of its normal moral and physical conditions of development and activity, but also produces the premature exhaustion and death of this labour-power itself” (681). Work is far from the only activity that human beings engage in, with relaxation, entertainment and rest being equally important components of human life.

#### **4.1. The unconstrained, but fearful Eloi**

Supposed centuries of the world's development into the garden-like state that the Time Traveller finds it in is initially implied to have been brought about by humanity's ultimate subjugation of nature: "I thought of the physical slowness of the people, their lack of intelligence and those big abundant ruins, and it strengthened my belief in a perfect conquest of Nature. For after the battle comes Quiet" (Wells 27). The Time Traveller expounds the daily activities of the Eloi in detail on several occasions, nothing that leisure is, in fact, all that they indulge in during their daily routines: "They spent all their time in playing gently, in bathing in the river, in making love in a half-playful fashion, in eating fruit and sleeping" (Wells 35). In such portrayals, the Eloi come off as infantile and childish, a common feature that they share with the citizens of *Brave New World*. Unlike the citizens, however, the Eloi are, in just about every sense of the word, free, at least until nighttime comes. The price that the Eloi pay for the leisure and safety of the day is a paralyzing fear of the dark, and a necessity to always stay in groups: "But she dreaded the dark, dreaded shadows, dreaded black things. Darkness to her was the one thing dreadful. It was a singularly passionate emotion, and it set me thinking and observing. I discovered then, among other things, that these little people gathered into the great houses after dark, and slept in droves" (Wells 37).

As for the case of the subterranean Morlocks, it is known that during the night, they emerge to the surface in order to prey on the Eloi for the sake of sustenance, and to engage in the collection of tools and materials, likely for the sake of maintaining their underground dwellings and ventilation systems. Whether they engage in any sort of activities beyond these very utilitarian ones is a question left unanswered by *The Time Machine*. Marx's aforementioned statement, however, coupled with the Time Traveller's assumptions regarding the Morlocks' predecessors' adaptation to underground work and life may present an answer: the subterranean creatures could, in fact, be completely adapted to alternating between states of work and rest for the entirety of their lives, as an ironic development of the perfect workforce – resembling ants more than humans.

#### **4.2. The strictly regulated, but sheltered Citizens**

"Never put off till to-morrow the fun you can have to-day" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 93), said Lenina to the philosophically-inclined, maladapted Bernard, and this is one of the numerous statements that can serve as a nutshell interpretation of human leisure in *Brave New World*. From their very conception, all citizens of the World state are assigned their specific role, and spend

around seven to eight hours a day working, with leisure activities being not only permitted, but even encouraged and enforced for the rest of the day. Controller Mond explains this to the Savage, who is reluctant to believe in the citizens' happiness: "“In spite of that awful work?’ ‘Awful? They don't find it so. On the contrary, they like it. It's light, it's childishly simple. No strain on the mind or the muscles. Seven and a half hours of mild, unexhausting labour, and then the soma ration and games and unrestricted copulation and the feelies. What more can they ask for?’” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 224)

In addition to carefully-rationed drugs and unconstrained sex, the citizens of the World State also enjoy such benefits as access to various affordable consumer goods, clothing, electronics, communication, and transportation, which the reader learns about from the stories Linda told to her son as he was growing up in the Malpais pueblo:

“And you can really go flying, whenever you like?”

“Whenever you like.” And she would tell him about the lovely music that came out of a box, and all the nice games you could play, and the delicious things to eat and drink, and the light that came when you pressed a little thing in the wall, and the pictures that you could hear and feel and smell, as well as see, and another box for making nice smells, and the pink and green and blue and silver houses as high as mountains, and the boxes where you could see and hear what was happening on the other side of the world... (Huxley, *Brave New World* 127-128)

The hyper-productive, wasteful nature of the civilized society is further shown in Linda's acclimation to receiving new clothes whenever needed, which resulted in her inability to manually stitch up John's clothing as he was growing up: “When he tore his clothes, Linda did not know how to mend them. In the Other Place, she told him, people threw away clothes with holes in them and got new ones” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 129-130).

An important facet of the citizens' social lives is the necessity and obligation for them to stay interconnected and in groups, engaging in bi-weekly Solidarity Services (essentially mass-like orgies). As observed by Diken: “In this utilitarian world, everybody has to be “socially useful” ([Huxley]p. 63). Thus, spending time alone is considered suspect. In a highly networked society, the desire for solitude signals a danger of unbonding” (154). This feature also rings true in regards to the Eloi, who engage in numerous intimate group activities, though their motivations differ. Where solitude for an Eloi might simply mean physical danger from an outside factor, in the World State's case, those with solitary inclinations are to be seen as a danger to society. If such individuals cannot be re-educated and brought back into the fold, they are removed from the majority of the



population to prevent the spread of such anti-social ideas, as was the case with Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson.

All this is to say nothing of *soma*, the miracle drug of the future, a hallucinative substance that, depending on the dosage, can either put the user in a mild state of euphoria and joy, or place them in an out-of-body-experience – a “trip” “to the gorgeous East [or] a dark eternity on the moon” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 56). Soma provides its users with spiritual ease of mind and happiness, and consumption is mandatory: “Christianity without tears-that’s what soma is” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 238). “Christianity” is used here both in the sense of a religion as a tool for thought suggestion and manipulation, and in the sense of a concept providing comfort for every individual that seeks comfort from it.

And what of religions proper? In *Brave New World’s* era of A. F. – *After Ford*, God has been replaced either with Ford – Henry Ford, the inventor of the assembly line which brought about mass production, and the Model T automobile which allowed ease of movement (and from which the Christian symbol of the cross evolved into the T within this world), or Freud – Sigmund Freud, “the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life.” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 39), whose research inspired the sexual revolution and casual sex life found in this civilization. Once again, Controller Mond is the one who gives a chilling interpretation of *Brave New World’s* reality regarding the matter of God and religion: “[God] manifests himself in different ways to different men. In premodern times he manifested himself as the being that’s described in these books. Now... he manifests himself as an absence; as though he wasn’t there at all. [...] God isn’t compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 234).

## **5. The role of technology**

Technology is the second focal point of this paper, and, once again, a pattern emerges: in both *The Time Machine* and *Brave New World*, technology and science are tools by which the worlds develop into the states found in the two stories. Wells and Huxley both kept track of contemporary scientific developments and trends, imagining futuristic devices and systems similar to many that exist in present day, and both seemed to subscribe to the idea that humankind should apply scientific and technical knowledge to assume greater control of nature. And yet Huxley would likely again hold Wells’s vagueness in description against him in this regard, as many of *Brave*

*New World's* technological implements are discussed in far greater detail and frequency than those within *The Time Machine*.

### **5.1. Absence and abandonment of technology that results in “harmony”**

At first glance, the future world that the Time Traveller is flung into appears to be entirely devoid of technology - with “no evidences of agriculture” (Wells 26), and a surface population that “displayed no vestige of a creative tendency. There were no shops, no workshops, no sign of importations among them” (Wells 35). To be sure, this arrangement confuses the Time Traveller, in particular because of the beautiful, intricate robes that the Eloi wear. Nonetheless, the Time Traveller’s initial hypothesis concludes that, at some point, “The whole world will be intelligent, educating and co-operating; things will move faster and faster towards the subjugation of Nature. In the end, wisely and carefully we shall readjust the balance of animal and vegetable life to suit our human needs” (Wells 26). In fulfilling their ultimate goal – the complete subjugation and modification of Nature for humanity’s needs – technology, science, and machines have long been rendered useless in this world of the future, while the Eloi are living and enjoying their lives in harmony without them all the same. And yet – the discovery of the Morlocks brings down such idealistic thinking, bringing about a new hypothesis: “The great triumph of Humanity I had dreamed of took a different shape in my mind. [...] I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science and working to a logical conclusion the industrial system of to-day. Its triumph had not been simply a triumph over Nature, but a triumph over Nature and the fellow-man” (Wells 42).

The Morlocks, then, must be the keepers of all technology remaining on the planet, and their connection to machines is implied in the Time Traveller’s short-lived exploration of the Morlocks’ underground dwelling: “feeling my way along the tunnel, I found the noise of machinery grow louder. [...] Great shapes like big machines rose out of the dimness, and cast grotesque black shadows, in which dim spectral Morlocks sheltered from the glare” (Wells 46). In the past, the surface-dwelling ruling class would likely own and rent the machines out to the subterranean working class, but as years passed, would fail to make attempts to understand and control the implements themselves, for lack of necessity. On the contrary, necessity itself would drive the Morlocks – just as their ancestors – to understand and maintain the machines that keep their underground tunnels ventilated. The complete lack of creative impulse in the Eloi also suggests that the Morlocks are, in fact, the ones making the Eloi’s intricate clothing, as the Time Traveller observes: “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. They did it as a standing horse paws with his foot, or as a man enjoys killing animals in sport: because ancient and departed necessities had impressed it on the organism” (Wells 48). The Morlocks even go so far as to steal the Time Traveller’s time machine – although this is likely for the sake of salvaging it for spare parts rather than understanding the principles behind it.

## **5.2. Ubiquity and perfection of technology that results in “harmony”**

To an even greater extent than Wells, Huxley is intrigued with the application of science and technology for the sake of subjugating the powers and whims of nature, evidenced by narration that accompanies a brutal scene of infant conditioning: “What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 22). But just as in *The Time Machine – Brave New World*’s technology subjugating nature to humankind’s will is simply a byproduct of a different, altogether more sinister design. The true goal of science and technology, in this world, is to subjugate humans to the will of other humans. From the moment of their conception, citizens of the World State are bound to the wills of their Controllers through the use of science and technology, culminating in unbreakable conditioning achieved through hypnotic sleep-learning and applied psychology.

Hypnopædic sleep-teaching machines play a key role in the conditioning process, and are referred to as “The greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time” by their operators (Huxley, *Brave New World* 28). The machines reproduce pre-recorded lessons while the user sleeps, but the topics never amount to any practical or scientific knowledge – the machines are incapable of having the user’s brain register genuine cause-and-effect connections between the lessons and the real world. Instead, the machines are used to instill the users with the World State’s moral and societal values through seemingly shallow slogans and mantras, proving to be quite efficient at such a task when coupled with other, physical forms of conditioning: “wordless conditioning is crude and wholesale; cannot bring home the finer distinctions, cannot inculcate the more complex courses of behaviour. For that there must be words, but words without reason.” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 28)

An almost religious, albeit superficial facet of the dystopian consumerist society is mentioned by Franck, who poses the features of “planned obsolescence of consumer goods, the conditioned desire for empty recreations, and the replacement of God with the shade of Henry Ford” (73). Indeed, as the Controller notes, “We haven’t any use for old thing here. [...] Particularly when

they're beautiful. Beauty's attractive, and we don't want people to be attracted by old things. We want them to like the new ones" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 219). The World state is clearly a hyper-industrial society that can produce an excess of material goods to satisfy its citizens. Indeed, why hold on to anything when the technology of the society you live in can easily afford you a shiny new thing to hold your fancy for a short while, before you look to replace it again?

This highly evolved state of technology offers many benefits – people are free from the clutches of illness or old age, quick transportation is virtually free, and forms of entertainment beyond one's wildest dreams are available at a whim. But is the price of being subservient to society as a whole and its technology truly worth it? The citizens of the World State certainly believe the answer to that question to be a resounding "yes". Huxley's depressing vision can be interpreted as a reaction to the economic crisis of the 1930s, brought about by optimistic industrialization, modernization, and hyperproduction in the decades prior:

From his vantage point of the first years of the Great Depression, Huxley saw how a boom of the 1920s culminated in much social and economic misery, and this seems to color his anti-utopian portrait of just what industrialization in its own right involves. His tale shows throughout a fear that if we base our society on machines, we will turn ourselves as workers and consumers into machines as well. (Cosans 730)

*Brave New World*, then, must be a vision of a world where an industrial economic boom never ceases, one where the world is never allowed to fall into crisis, one where manufacturing and consumption remain at an all-time high – all the time. In the words of the Controller: "industrial civilization is only possible when there's no self-denial. Self-indulgence up to the very limits imposed by hygiene and economics. Otherwise the wheels stop turning" (Huxley *Brave New World* 237) – and should the wheels ever stop turning – "a thousand thousand thousand men and women [will] have starved to death" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 43).

At last – in *Music at Night*, Huxley presents to us, once again, the thesis that regardless of the level of its technological development, the vast majority of mankind will need – or even want – to be regulated by higher forces; in the case of *Brave New World*, that being an intellectual caste assuring stability above all:

Coaches may give place to airplanes, but man remains very much what he was – a mainly gregarious animal endowed with a certain number of anti-social instincts. Whatever tools he uses, however slowly or quickly he may travel, he must always be governed and regimented. (Huxley, *Music at Night*, 149-150)

## 6. Ecology, animals, and humanity

The final element common in both *The Time Machine* and *Brave New World* to be analyzed is the state of ecology, as well as flora and fauna that persist in the respective worlds. A common feature of both works is the lack of a motif of pollution – with two explanations presenting themselves. The first argument states simply that pollution was not perceived as an important issue when the two works were published – neither in 1932, nor in 1895, despite the fact that pollution greatly and negatively affected the lives of the English, the Londoners in particular, from as early as the seventeenth century (Cook and Werner).

The second explanation is derived from the works themselves: Wells and Huxley both seem to imply that through the applied power of science, the world ultimately becomes a much cleaner place to live in. This passage from *The Time Machine* in particular supports this theory:

The air was free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruits and sweet and delightful flowers; brilliant butterflies flew hither and thither. The ideal of preventive medicine was attained. Diseases had been stamped out. I saw no evidence of any contagious diseases during all my stay. And I shall have to tell you later that even the processes of putrefaction and decay had been profoundly affected by these changes. (Wells 27)

Likewise, passages from *Brave New World*, which otherwise fails to point at any sort of prolonged ecological disaster or pollution, portray the citizens' conditioning to include important lessons and mottos regarding hygiene and cleanliness: “‘But cleanliness is next to fordliness,’ she insisted. ‘Yes, and civilization is sterilization,’ Bernard went on, concluding on a tone of irony the second hypnopædic lesson in elementary hygiene” (Huxley *Brave New World* 110). Nature has, in fact, been thoroughly sustained in the World State, but only in a utilitarian, recreational sense, as observed by R. S. Deese:

In the society of the World State, the natural world has been well preserved, but only as a backdrop for mindless and thoroughly social recreation. One can visit the Lake District, or with the right permits, a Savage Reservation in the American West. But the contemplation of either the beautiful or the sublime in nature itself is dangerous to the health of the social organism, and therefore precluded by thorough social conditioning. (226)

To continue, it is interesting to look at the topic of wildlife: it did not take the Time Traveller long to notice the complete lack of any animal life in the places he frequented, and their absence is further underlined when he observes the Eloi's exclusively vegetarian form of sustenance: “Fruit,

by the way, was all their diet. [...] Indeed, I found afterwards that horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, had followed the Ichthyosaurus into extinction” (Wells 23).

Similarly, mentions of or scenes featuring live animals are a rare occurrence in *Brave New World*. On the few occasions animals are mentioned in London, it is in the context of farms or factories – used in an exclusively utilitarian fashion: “From the grounds of the Internal and External Secretion Trust came the lowing of those thousands of cattle which provided, with their hormones and their milk, the raw materials for the great factory at Farnham Royal” (Huxley *Brave New World* 72). The next mention of animals – admittedly, dead animals – occurs during Bernard and Lenina’s airborne journey to New Mexico, as they pass above the protective electric fence that gates off the reservation from the civilized world: “At its foot, here and there, a mosaic of white bones, a still unrotted carcass dark on the tawny ground marked the place where deer or steer, puma or porcupine or coyote, or the greedy turkey buzzards [...] had come too close to the destroying wires” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 105).

However, in the Reservation itself, the rules seem to change. As with many other motifs present throughout *Brave New World*, Malpais once again serves as a contrast to the World State as the only place where live animals can be observed outside a factory or enclosed industrial. This occurs in two instances: the first being during the rain-summoning ritual: “Suddenly the leader of the dancers broke out of the line, ran to a big wooden chest [...] and pulled out a pair of black snakes. [...] He tossed the snakes to the first-comers, then dipped back into the chest for more. More and more, black snakes and brown and mottled – he flung them out” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 114). The second such situation occurs during Bernard and Lenina’s introduction to Linda: “Two famine-stricken dogs were nosing obscenely in the garbage at its door. Inside, when they entered, the twilight stank and was loud with flies” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 118).

There exists an alternate interpretation of the “animal” motifs present throughout *The Time Machine* and *Brave New World*. One that does not concern the literal appearance of animals in the stories, but rather the concept of humanity, and what it is that sets humans apart from all other animals.

In *The Time Machine*, the Time Traveller’s opinion of the Eloi rapidly shifts following his discovery of the Morlocks, and the establishment of the “capitalist-future” theory. Despite his initial impression of them as childish, comfortable descendants of all humankind, he starts to perceive them as cattle for the Morlocks following this event: “I understood now what all the beauty of the Over-world people covered. Very pleasant was their day, as pleasant as the day of

the cattle in the field. Like the cattle, they knew of no enemies and provided against no needs” (Wells 64-65).

As for the Morlocks, he feels more inclined than anything to smack the beasts’ heads with an iron lever: “I rejoined her with a mace in my hand more than sufficient, I judged, for any Morlock skull I might encounter. And I longed very much to kill a Morlock or so. Very inhuman, you may think, to want to go killing one’s own descendants! But it was impossible, somehow, to feel any humanity in the things” (Wells 56). It goes without saying that the Time Traveller considers neither of the two future races to be truly human – one had given up their intellect and progressive capacity for the sake of comfort, while the other had degenerated into carnivorous, cannibalistic brutes – but he is certainly more inclined towards the infantile Eloi than the brutish Morlocks.

In Huxley’s *Brave New World*, animal motifs pertaining to humans are far more common than appearances of animals themselves. Numerous examples show various characters and situations referencing animals. Bernard, for instance, frustrated by his peers - “Idiots, swine!” (55), and the number of references that the Director makes in his tour of the Hatchery with the students: “Rams wrapped in theremogene beget no lambs” (5), then, “they didn’t content themselves with merely hatching out embryos: any cow could do that” (13), and, “‘Consider the horse.’ They considered it. Mature at six; the elephant at ten. While at thirteen a man is not yet sexually mature; and is only full-grown at twenty” (14-15). Finally, among other cases, this is evidenced by the image of gas-masked policemen that arrest John, Bernard and Helmholtz: “a swine-masked policeman hurried across the room and laid a hand on the young man’s shoulder” (216). The implication in these symbols suggests that Huxley has completely dehumanized and equated the subservient citizens of the World State to mere cattle.

This issue reaches its peak with John, who is enraged by children flocking into the room as his mother dies: “In a moment, it seemed, the ward was maggoty with them. [...] A group soon clustered at the foot of her bed, staring with the frightened and stupid curiosity of animals suddenly confronted by the unknown” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 202). Next, in his isolation, the helicopters that bring forth the crowds that flocks to observe him in the abandoned lighthouse are equated to pests - “locusts” and “giant grasshoppers” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 255). John himself is not spared humiliation by dehumanization – by the dehumanized mass itself, who treats him as children would as an attraction at a zoo: “laughing, clicking their cameras, throwing (as to an ape) peanuts, packets of sex-hormone chewing-gum, pan-glandular petite beurrés” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 255). In anger, he attempts to drive the crowd off, but this only further fuels their amusement: “‘Go away!’ he shouted. The ape had spoken; there was a burst of laughter and hand-clapping. ‘Good old Savage! Hurrah, hurrah!’” (Huxley, *Brave New World* 255). John falls

into a self-flagellating frenzy, and the mass falls into a frenzy of its own – a soma-induced orgy, pulling him in as well. From this shame, the “Savage” John, arguably the most humane human in the entire story, finds salvation in self-flagellation, and ultimately, suicide. For what other animal besides the human would find salvation in pain? Certainly not the dehumanized, hedonistic masses of the World State, and of Aldous Huxley’s design.



## Conclusion

A common consensus often presents itself regarding both *The Time Machine* and *Brave New World*, suggesting that they are both cautionary tales warning about the dangers of capitalism and consumerism. However, their intended messages seem to diverge: in the case of *The Time Machine*, it is quite clear that it indeed presents warnings about the dangers of uncontrolled capitalistic exploitation and complacency, but in the case of *Brave New World*, it is hard to derive an exclusively cautionary meaning. Many systems and structures that Huxley developed in *Brave New World* are expanded to such lengths that it would likely be inappropriate to interpret them as accepted or refused from the author at face value. Was Huxley critiquing consumerism, or resigning to it being a fact of life and providing the supposed end result; was he critiquing Stalinism, or refining it as a form of government and presenting its possible ultimate goal? Rather than providing a definite answer to these questions, it seems that both Huxley and Wells contemplated on the increasing use of technology as a means to make life more comfortable, and, consequently, what this kind of lifestyle would ultimately do to people and their environment.

Whatever the case may be, in their criticism of contemporary capitalism and industrialization, Herbert George Wells and Aldous Huxley have both created intricate worlds worthy of awe, with meticulously crafted social systems where misuse of technology has led to the majority of humankind being subjugated by a privileged minority, and with striking imagery of dehumanized masses equated to cattle, they bring into question humanity's relation to science and technology, and warn – possibly even more so than on the topic of industrialization – that people should be wary in what ways and for what purposes they or their governments apply artificial tools and scientific knowledge. Total subjugation is a state achievable by means of various political systems rather than a single one, but misappropriated science almost always seems to be the tool by which it is brought about.

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