Posthumanism and The Role of Technology: Between Myth and Metaphor in H.G. Wells' Dystopian Novel the Time Machine

Halil Bashota[a,d] [iD], Manjola Brahaj Halili[b] [iD], Alisa Sadiku[c] [iD], Luiza Zeqiri[d] [iD], Xhevahire Millaku[d] [iD], Alma Lama[d⁻] [iD]

[a]*English and American Studies, University of Graz, Austria*
[b]*Faculty of Philology, University of Prizren, Kosova*
[c]*American University of the Middle East, Kuwait*
[d]*Faculty of English, UBT Higher Education Institution, Prishtina, Kosova*

Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to demonstrate how H G Wells' novella, The Time Machine examined the contemporary social, cultural, and political environment via a posthumanist perspective of far future. Adopting a qualitative research design, the study emphasized on critical and analytical techniques in the novella. The study was carried out with close reading method of the text, identifying sections which relate to posthumanism and the impact of technology in futuristic perspective. The data so identified was analyzed with the view to verify the theoretical underpinnings and the posthumanist perspective and examine the narrative rolling between myth and metaphor. The findings revealed how tremendous upheavals of the Industrial Revolution in the early eighteenth century influenced several aspects of society. It was evident that Wells was portraying and analyzing the futuristic and experimental changes that society was confronting, including technological advancement, its role, societal divisions, and inequality as society changes from Victorian England to a future time in 802,701. Implications for Research and Practice. The findings imply that despite the futuristic ambition to project technology to achieve innovative results, it may also replace humans; therefore, we should still de-mask that superstitious ambition to the extent that its role may still be restricted to supplementary means, whether personal or societal, and as tools that work for humans` benefit in proving their material goods. The study also implies how philosophical and scientific conception on the excessing role of the technology can serve for the human benefit.

Introduction

The term Posthumanism was coined by Katherine Hayles in her book *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), which was inspired by the portrayal of persons or entities in science fiction and futurology,

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⁻ Corresponding Author.
Email: alma.lama@ubt-uni.net
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suggesting that they exist in a state beyond being human. Etymologically, in the term posthumanism, the use of the prefix 'post' denotes 'after something' and humanism is a term showing the state of being "human." The term posthumanism is densely packed with several legal, biological, psychological, philosophical, sociological, historical, and literary aspects (Ferrando, 2013). These aspects extend to the social, cultural, technological, economic, and political dimensions of society. Notably, the physical appearance also contributes to the classification of a person as human or not in determining humanist within the novel. The understanding of posthuman in a fictional tale is a representation of the "other" creature or person (Carbonell, 2015). Otherness is a term coined to represent someone or something that is unlike the norm. This concept of otherness may relate to something "beyond" human, not self, but the "other".

Despite that the concept of "posthumanism" was pretty much controversial, the term is applied to a wider range of disciplines, from an early renaissance to the late twentieth, not only in critical theory but also in other areas which cover the whole range of social sciences: philosophy, sociology, history, and literature, but lately it is aligned with the role of technology. The future of technology inspires great hope to all humans. It can aid in overcoming some of the biggest obstacles that the human civilization is facing, such as poverty, disease and climate change. Technology can be a key economic engine for people who believe in the potential of innovation and the promise of creative destruction to promote economic growth and improve quality of life (Wolfe, 2010; Wolff, 2021). However, it can also be a tool for extreme fear and oppression, introducing bias into information processing algorithms and automated decision-making processes, escalating economic and social disparities within and between nations, or developing new weapons and attack vectors that are unlike anything we have ever had to deal with (Wolfe, 2010; Wolff, 2021).

The early twentieth century marks an era of great developments in all aspects of life, and most evidently in technology. This progress was impossible unless it included advancements in other fields, especially in humanities: art, culture and literature. However, in literature, there were movements that overlapped and succeeded one another with amazing speed (Daiu, 2010), as writers of different genres travelled around and saw these rapid changes as a way to communicate with a wider public by glorifying or criticizing these developments. These writers narrated stories and tales, a few of which were bound to their experiences and dreams that constituted unknown and fictive facts, and belonged to imaginary horizons. Such writings could be included under utopias (if glorifying) or dystopias (if criticizing). Most of these writings were projections in the future, with science and technology as a major theme. Latest studies have even argued that the introduction of the term "technology" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries signaled a change from the riskier, or hazardous perspective that larger-scale, more sophisticated technical systems were a semi - independent type of advancement in and of themselves (Marx, 2010). More recently, technologists have harshly condemned what they see as a surge of new luddites as people determined to stop technological advancement and innovation in order to lessen the effects of technological change on society (Frieman, 2021).

The purpose of this study was to analyze and interpret H.G. Wells' science fiction novella *The Time Machine*, aiming to develop an analytical overview on the futuristic and experimental approach of the new changes that the society was facing, for what much of Wells' writings pertain in a form of thoughts` mosaics from fragments of his experience, memory, and fantasy. The study elicits how H.G. Wells' *Time Machine* critiques the prevailing social, cultural, and political landscape through the futuristic (technological) lens of posthumanism. The background to the writing of the book and the external circumstances are relevant in providing the relevant guiding context. The advancements as a product of the Industrial Revolution from the early eighteenth century influenced several aspects of society (King & Page, 2017). Hence, the main aspects discussed in the novella relate to technology advancement, its role, societal divisions and inequality as society changes from Victorian English to a future time in a random era of 802,701.

More precisely, the paper raises two research premises: first, whether the advancement of technology will replace people in the near future, according to the model portrayed in Wells' dystopian novella' and second, what is the role of technology in this regard? Would technology play an excessive role beyond what it was created for? These issues were adequately supported by theoretical underpinnings as underlined in critical theories of posthumanism.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The term "posthumanism" has been widely discussed by scholars and literary theorists who tried to theorize the concept of post-humanism. For instance, In critical theory, the posthuman is an imaginative and speculative creature who seeks the rebirth of the human being. The posthumanist criticism theory claims that human nature is autonomous and has the free will, which is the cause of all imperfections. D. J. Haraway (1991) considers posthuman as not a singular, defined individual, but rather a combination of multiple, heterogeneous entities. Matthew (2018) asserts that terms such as 'post-humanism,' 'post-humanity,' and 'the post-human' are being used to describe an increasingly wide and bewildering array of phenomena in both, specialized scholarly and broader popular contexts. Matthew (2018) further states that the sphere of post-humanist approach may be used even in

other fields "spheres of human activity that have been described as 'post-humanist' and includes academic disciplines, artistic movements, spiritual movements, commercial research and development programs designed to engineer particular new technologies, works of science fiction, and campaigns advocating specific legislative or regulatory action."

In this perspective, Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and Von Savigny (2001) discusses two kinds of posthumanist approaches: the one which prioritizes the *subjectivism,* and represents the aspects of non - human objects or the use of technology instead; while the other, prioritizes the *practical* one, an approach that counts the pragmatic aspect, by rendering the individual and social practice. Another theorist that sheds light into aspects of humanity vs post-humanity is Herman Dooyeweerd, a philosopher and theorist, whose ideas lie pretty much on the religious motive, stating that "human and nonhuman alike function subject to a common "*law- side*", which is diverse, composed of a number of distinct laws –spheres or aspects" (Dooyeweerd, 1984). Latkovic (2002), another most prominent theorists, refers to posthumanism as a human enhancement when invoking the idea of how a future perspective of a posthuman approach will imply the "redundancy of humanity". Pepperell (2005), too, asserts the idea of looking at posthuman from the perspective of involving human enhancement to the extent that rejects traditional technological determinism. In his estimation Pepperell (2005), disregards the role of technology into humanity, as something that in any way, will challenge humanity, despite the desire for controlling and making it a useful tool for feeding their appetites of experimenting with scientific advantages:

"Humans have imagined for a long time that the ability to develop and control technology was one of the defining characteristics of our condition, something that assured us of our superiority over other animals and our unique status in the world. Ironically, this sense of superiority and uniqueness is being challenged by the very technologies we are now seeking to create, and it seems the balance of dominance between human and machine is slowly shifting."   (Pepperell, 2005).

Graham (2015) goes much further and considers posthumanism from a cultural dimension, looking at it through theorizing different aspects, as it constrains the issue within the relation of posthumanism with other disciplines. Graham's theory is constituted by the "interplay between the world of scientific, bioethical theorizing and the world of the cultural imagination – myth, science, fiction, as well as, popular culture and religion" (Miah, 2007). Hence, accordingly as part of discussion, was the representation of a posthuman depiction which exceeds technology, but is made through other bodies, considering the aliens, monsters and other intelligent beings, that can be seen within the posthumanist discourse (Jeffery, 2016). As an example, it has taken the metaphors in describing the technology as something that has diminished the advantage of humanity, to serve it for their purpose towards the progress of "research into human genetics" (Miah, 2007).

The advent of the twentieth century saw the revolutionizing of several industrial features for human convenience, such as transportation and manufacturing, which laid the groundwork for later accomplishments like biomedical advances in human reproduction and life-sustaining technology. The transformation of the human species brought about by these technologies is a major topic of posthumanist theory, postulated by Haraway (1985); D. Haraway (1991). Haraway has been accepted as one of the most significant intellectuals who have described the influence of technology on human species. She had introduced the concept of a cyborg, which she defined as a being that is both human and mechanical. Cyborgs are found in dystopian societies and the cyberpunk subgenres. Cyborgs also symbolize how technology has altered the "essence" of the human (Haraway, 1985; D. Haraway, 1991). D. Haraway (1991) showed that the ontological dualisms that dominate our lives and compel us to submit are finally eliminated by the cyborg, which is a creature that is both real and fictitious.

All these theorists and philosophers who advanced the theory of posthumanism have one thing in common: they all fear the progress of a bioengineering society and question the existence of humanism. In other words, in order to further discuss the differences between human and non-human, or a kind of a dehumanization as a term, Hassan (1977) notes that if it will continue for such a trend to follow, the concept of humanism may come to an end: "Humanism may be coming to an end, as humanism transforms itself into something one must helplessly call posthumanism, Hassan (1977). Even though Bolter (2016) theorizes the concept as something new that is coming to be within the trend of future perspective and rejects the traditional cause of the western humanism.

In the novella, *Time Machine*, posthumanism is a distant future that borrows on the present to try and paint a picture of what becomes of humanity in the year 802,701 AD. Wells uses a time machine experiment which can take a person into the future and also in the past. The guests are puzzled by this and are skeptical of the cleverness and innovativeness of the Time Traveler. Wells' choice of guests as affluent members who represent the upper echelons in society informs the development in the subsequent narrative of division between the Elois and the Morlocks. The description of the Elois is that they have "childlike" needs such that they had "a graceful gentleness, a certain childlike ease. Besides, "they look so frail that I could fancy myself flinging the whole dozens of them about like nine-pin" (Wells, p. 28). These attributes match the characteristics and social stereotypes often attached to society's upper echelons. The undesirable characteristics of the Morlocks who are aggressive with cannibalistic tendencies preying on the Elois, have

some levels of intelligence and are in stark contrast with the Elois (Wells, p. 39). The representation shows the effects of stark class division that precipitates is something akin to a social revolution with the lower classes preying on the higher class. The ultimate outcome is the dissatisfaction and class struggle to remedy the perverse inequality bedeviling the humans.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design with an emphasis on critical and analytical techniques mainly through the readings and analysis of H. G. Wells' novella, *The Time Machine*, and the viable literary theoretical aspects from the discipline. It also made a wider coverage of all aspects of technology and its role, towards the future perspective predefined in Wells' theory. The qualitative approach ideally suits to study the novella within the context of the Victorian England and to understand the dystopian future presented in the novella.

The research was carried out with close reading method of the text, identifying sections which relate to posthumanism and the impact of technology in futuristic perspective. The data so identified was analyzed with the view to verify the theoretical underpinnings and the posthumanist perspective and examine the narrative rolling between myth and metaphor in *The Time Machine*, a dystopian story.

Results and Findings

- ### *The Time Machine, a dystopian story.*

In all facets of life, but most notably in science and technology, the 20th century saw significant advancements. Without breakthroughs in other domains, particularly in the humanities—art, culture, and literature—this development would not have been feasible. Among the most prominent science fiction authors was H.G. Wells, with his novella which is subject of this study, *The Time Machine.* The author, as a prominent socialist as well, looked very deeply through his time machine into the developments that were taking place globally in his times. In his novella, Wells talks about contemporary trends, developments and scientific progress.

Wells' criticism of class division remains viable seen by the narrator, as he gives the story about the time travel in the future, among the people that he depicted as two separated societies: the Elois and the Morlocks, a division made as early as in the beginning of the novella. This division was not only portrayed in the protagonists: the physical appearance, personality and characters, but it still develops the idea of a separated society into a more diverse species, where the Morlocks are depicted to represent a society that lived underground, isolated. The science-fiction novel sets the tone of geology and archaeology by referring to geometry, physics, time, and space and dimension aspects like time. He relies on these disciplines to use the present as the "material for the future" (Wells, p. 19).

The dominant species in the future are shown divided as the Elois and the Morlocks. The former represented aspects of humanity and the values that keep a society together such as cooperation and mutual understanding. The latter had cannibal characteristics feeding on the former, "These Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon" (Wells, p. 60). The Time Traveler is disturbed at the thought of flesh consumed as meat by the Morlocks. The Morlocks represent undesirable and distasteful aspects of humanity that led the Time Traveler to vent "And so these inhuman sons of men!" (Wells, p. 60). With this contextual background, the discussion below expounds on the dystopian novel.

Wells makes fun of posthumanism when considering enhancement of humanity, by overthrowing the idea of only promoting the universal human attributes, however he proposes a real aristocracy with a perfect scientific approach and industrial system. In fact, the author reminds us that the intersections between the technology and humanity must stay as strong as people would see it useful and applicable. He debriefs the necessity for a controlled and balanced civilization, which could only be as a result of a good science and an industrial system suitable for the time.

"The great triumph of humanity I had dreamed of now took a different shape in my mind. It had been no triumph of universal education and general co-operation, such as I had imagined at the first. Instead, I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science and industrial system of to- day." (Wells: p. 118)

The primary contention by Wells in the dystopian future is that the present is filled with inequalities in social and political aspects which will build a troubled and discontented society in the year 802,701. Dystopian narratives create a picture in the mind of a reader of perfect conditions and also show a radical departure from the perfect circumstances. Dystopian narratives aim to explore human flaws and warn of the effects of societal divisions. At the beginning of the novella, Wells' adventure leads him to the Elois who embody aspects of a communal socialist system where there are no class divisions. They lead a simple lifestyle as vegetarians and share common resources. The Elois are seen as having attained a level of

satisfaction to the effect that they lived well with no evidence that they toiled "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", (Wells, p. 34).

This description shows no sign of struggle or competition in the distant future. The Elois lived communally sleeping in a hall with no leader or representative speaking for the group. They wore the same clothes, ate the same food, and slept in the same circumstances. In effect, they represent an equal society with no class divisions. However, the downside of this perfection is that it possibly contributed to the frail nature of the Elois due to the inadequate strain of the muscles and a developed brain to protect themselves against the Morlocks. Wells presents that society and humankind are subject to change through his futuristic approach by later providing a contrasting view of the underworld "dark" creatures that mirror the subjugated working class in Victorian English. The root of all this evil including cannibalism is represented by the Morlocks who feast on the Elois in an unequal society.

"Again, the exclusive tendency of richer people – due, no doubt, to the increasing refinement of their education, and the widening gulf between them and the rude violence of the poor – is already leading to the closing, in their interest, of considerable portions of the surface of the land" (Wells, p. 48).

Capitalism is a political and economic system that is best described as a man-eat man society. The rich and powerful profit immensely from the oppression of the poor working classes by creating a society of predator and prey. This results in social injustice and inequality (Wackfelt, 2013). Wells' *Time Machine* thus provides a powerful critique of the capitalist society of Victorian English existing at the time. The narrative style of Wells is descriptive providing a warning of the dire and horrific consequences of the prevailing Industrial Revolution that was characterized by scientific discoveries and the evolution of greed in the humanity. The adventures of the Time Traveler, utilizing the progressive technology that he invented the time machine with, provide criticism on class divisions, communism, capitalism that blurred social, political, and technological criticism. The England of 802,701 is entirely different from the Victorian circumstances. Communism which was a common philosophy during Wells' writing of the novel propounded by theorists like Karl Marx is called into question. This is by a reflection of the lifestyle of the Elois whose communal lives lead to loss of curiosity making them dumb human beings with the intellectual capacity of a five-year-old. Therefore, communism was not a magic solution that Wells presented in his novella.

Wells' critique of the political system is the development of an aristocracy as a result of the inequality and class divisions identified in the novella. The Elois' lifestyle and organization is in contrast to the Morlocks. Further, the discontent and the exploitation of the working class prompted a social revolution led by the Morlocks. Victorian England's class divisions could deteriorate as well as a result of its class divisions. The Elois represents the aristocracy as per Wells' I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science and working to a logical conclusion the industrial system of to-day. The time traveler challenges the political aspect to the extent that the society is organized communally with no leader or the so-called representatives of the people. The posthumanist society is thus a triumph over other forms of political organization including totalitarianism and liberalism. Its triumph had not been simply a triumph over Nature, but a triumph over Nature and the fellow-man." These Elois creatures represent a small group of elites who had benefitted from the class divisions to stamp their authority and rule over the small working-class groups who lurked in the darkness. An unsatisfied lower class presents a real threat of violence to the unarmed and lazy aristocracy as Wells elucidates.

- ### *Posthumanism and the role of technology*

Historically seen from the critical perspective in the past, especially the role of technology in posthuman themes and what is the distinction of this topic towards the philosophical inquiries into technology, it gets us back to Aristotle, and his idea of technology and science, which could be used as an example by other philosophers of the time, from Jacques Ellul to Martin Heidegger and Rayner. Even though these authors never used the term posthumanism, they were critical and talked of euphemism that despite science and technology are an integral part of the contemporary theory of posthumanism; hence, they still criticized its role in society. For instance, Heidegger's concept of *enframing* offers a critical view, which treats it as a process rather than an artefact. Indeed, Heidegger famously states that the 'essence of technology is by no means anything technological' (Hassan, 1977), and as a skeptical, his views on technology are considered as a threat to nature, as he says: "it's always involving alteration through destruction", (Miah, 2007).

This attitude reinforces the idea of looking at the technological advantages from the perspective of bioengineering, as sciences that prospects posthumanism by suggesting that it is not merely a latecomer as Derrida concerns, but rather a general claim about overcoming that is located within the sphere of biological engineering. Hence, the role of technology in the appearance and development of posthumanism came as a surprise for many theorists. The critical theory and cultural studies did not focus on technology for long,

missing some concepts of a real posthuman depiction, by underlying the claim that technology is "the missing ingredients", in the recipe of the twenty-first century, (Hauskeller, Philbeck, & Carbonell, 2015). Instead, the technology for post humanists was considered an ideology, by which a particular kind of instrumental attitude can be combined with the other sciences that shape the world, (Miah, 2007).

Oberdiek and Tiles (2005) contend that the fundamentally opposing views of technology—one fundamentally optimistic, which holds that technology is a tool used by humans to achieve greater goals, and the other fundamentally pessimistic—are often at the core of arguments over new technologies and the resulting global changes. A pure optimistic or pessimistic perspective of technology is said to be insufficient to represent the subtleties and complexity of our interaction with it, according to technology philosophers, who contend that none of these viewpoints is entirely true. Understanding technology and how we may improve the designs, deployments, and refinements of it demands capturing that subtlety and complexity via in-depth research of the effects of various technical breakthroughs and the ways they have played out in all their nuanced and contentious messiness around the world (Wolfe, 2010; Wolff, 2021).

However, the effect of technology in society and the technological arsenal has tremendously changed, when compared to the past century. Thus, posthumanism treats technology as an ideology that enframes our utilization, rather than an artefact that merely enables new kinds of functionality. This is why one should not conflate the history of technology with the history of posthumanism, because only part of the posthumanist ideal seems connected to artefacts and our use of them, (Marx, 2010).

Hence, Wells keeps a central place among the authors of the science fictions that wrote about technological advantages and its relation to human bodies which produced "posthuman themes". His works mainly dealt with imaginative and futuristic concepts of the development of science and technology which he depicts in his scientific novels: "*The Invisible Man*" and "*The Time Machine*", through time traveling, parallel universes as well as extraterritorial life. He sees science rather than a philosophical perspective as something that would serve more people`s needs only when it is used appropriately with technology as an instrument that can help to benefit humanity. In *The Time Machine*, technology is very crucial, as it is described as it plays an important role in the story. In chapter one, Wells projected his inception through the chapter "Inventor", where he introduces his narrator, the Time Traveler, a well-known mathematician who will present the result of his "dystopian world", a world where science and technology will be intertwined to create a phantom science story.

Technological advancement is one of the buzzwords in the 20th century which began with the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century. The class divisions among society can be traced to the primary aim of subjecting human nature to ensure industrial growth that needs technology. The evolution of technology has rapidly spread across the globe. This spread is prevalent and manifests in the social, cultural, and political dimensions of humankind. The dystopian novel by Wells that forms the subject of this discussion provides a critical analysis of the role of technology. From the first chapter, the protagonist is portrayed as an inventor of the time machine whose purpose is to apprehend the distant future of humanity (Pordzik, 2012).

The social aspect under this heading is critiqued as follows. In the novella, technology develops as a human necessity but it does not overshadow the humanity of people. The miniature creatures of the Elois represent their harmony with nature with minimal need for technology except for making their clothes. They were vegetarians and directly picked fruit from the trees and flowers to decorate themselves. They illustrate the values that a character such as Weena exhibits human core values such as hope, love, friendliness, simplicity, fear, shame, patience, and gratitude. The Time Traveler rescues this miniature creature called Weena from drowning a testament to the care and some romanticism developed between them (Wells, p. 43). The implication of this is that it develops the thesis under this category to the effect that technology does not overshadow humanity. It shows that both humanity and technology have evolved concurrently and at a steady pace. The protagonist remarks that there was social triumph such that "no signs of struggle, neither social nor economical struggle. The shop, the advertisement, traffic, all that commerce which constitutes the body of our world, was gone…" (Wells, p. 34).

Despite this evolution, the reliance on a person's natural and physical aspects is still relevant. The narrator describes how the miniature world people led a simplistic lifestyle. They only had the basic necessities and did not seem to have evolved predominantly. For instance, a simple thing like a match excited them because there was no fire in the underworld. The narrator described how he relied on his natural weapons as stated that "But, as it was, I stood there with only the weapons and the powers that Nature had endowed me with—hands, feet, and teeth; these, and four safety matches that remained to me" (Well, p. 54).

However, nowadays, technology has gone much further by being developed into a real futuristic and ambitious plans, it's still viewed from two perspectives: first, the technology used as supplementary means, to provide material goods, despite that it may be very personal or societal, starting from un-programmed robots and different electronic platforms, vehicles and machines; and second, the enhancement of the

philosophical and scientific aspects that humanity can relay in controllable future, i.e. the smart technology, programming robots, as well as artificial intelligent machines.

- ### *The Concept of Four Dimension (Time and Space)*

However, the author, through the narrator of *The Time Machine*, the omniscient and prospective subjectivity invites for a new and generative idea of the theory of four dimensions. Any of the real bodies have extension in four directions: it must have length, breadth, thickness, and duration.

'Clearly' the Time Traveler proceeded, 'any real body must have extension in four directions: it must have Length, Breadth, Thickness, and – Duration. But through a natural infirmity of the flesh, which I will explain to you in a moment, we incline to overlook this fact. There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time. There is, however, a tendency to draw an unreal distinction between the former three dimensions and the latter, because it happens that our consciousness moves intermittently in one direction along the latter from the beginning to the end of our lives. (Wells, 1895)

When looking back at the theory of Kant about space and time, Wells` relativity confounds Kant, who bases his theory on space as something not real and not objective, as its presence is only subjective and ideal. However, that is viewed as an attempt to engage the Leibnizian "rationalist", and Netonian "absolutist", as concepts of transcendental idealization, (Parsons, 1992). Despite Kant, Wells wants to represent a new line of thinking from the perspective of combining philosophy and science, and science and technology to develop the idea of revolutionizing the society in which he lived. The theory of time and space presents successfully the four dimensions, consisting that except the three that already exist and are known to us, the *length, breadth,* and *thickness,* there are the fourth one, which is *duration.* He then says that "there is a tendency to draw an unreal distinction between the former three dimensions and the latter, because it happens that our consciousness moves intermittently in one direction along the latter from the beginning to the end of our lives" (Wells, 1895). Space is not something objective and real, nor a substance, nor an accident, nor a relation; instead, it is subjective and ideal, and originates from the mind's nature in accord with a stable law as a scheme, as it were, for coordinating everything sensed externally (Hatfield, 2006).

The travelling in time is definitely more sophisticated than space, and through it, the author enables us to experience time in the future and time in the past. The idea that we can only move in space: right, left, up and down, and not in the time, as we cannot move away from the present, doesn't seem as convincing as the world believes. Yet, according to The Time Traveler, there is always a tendency to move away from the time present, and this is part of our mental existence, which is "immaterial and has no dimensions" and moves along from birth to death (Wells, 1895).

"My dear sir, that is just where you are wrong. That is just where the whole world has gone wrong. We are always getting away from the present moment. Our mental existences, which are immaterial and have no dimensions, are passing along the Time Dimension with uniform velocity from cradle to the grave." (Wells, 1895).

This dimension differs from space as it is not found by the mercury, when it went up in the morning, and down in the evening. Wells criticizes European science, through his unnamed narrator considering that geometry is not taught in the right way: "the geometry, for instance, they taught you at school is founded on a misconception" (Wells, 1895), and the other one which is the mathematical line of thickness *nil*, which according to the speaker does not exist; in fact, must be represented into the four dimensions:

"Any real body must have extension in four directions: it must have Length, Breadth, Thickness, and Duration. There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time.   (Wells, 1895)

According to Wells, there is a four-dimensional space-time where time and space are on an equal footing. The four extensions of anybody are length, breadth, thickness, and duration. The fourth-dimension theory was propounded as a way to explore the scientific and technological developments of the nineteenth century (Throesch, 2017). The dimensional analogy presented by the Time Traveler is that of a cube and a plane. In the beginning, he asks his guests whether "an instantaneous cube can exist?" The fourth dimension is presented as time which is a movement of our consciousness through space it cannot fully recognize and manipulate. (Throesch, 2017). The four-dimensional movement is linked to riding "upon a switchback" (Wells, p. 23). The approach that is used by Wells is a friendlier scientific investigation that is led by curiosity as opposed to greed for power. He seeks to explore the fourth dimension using this approach. After Wells' exploration of the land of the Morlocks and the Elois, he concludes the science-fiction narrative by looking at the elements of astronomy and evolution. This challenges the common perceptions at the time because the social aspect of artistic entertainment through science-fiction was yet to develop as it is to date.

- ### *White Sphinx between myth and metaphor*

The White Sphinx in the novel appears to the Time Traveler at the beginning of the novel. The Sphinx is relevant because it represents a dynamic future that is both welcome and scary. The psychic state of the traveler when he first sees it remains a mixture of awe, dread, despair, and a determination to hold onto his sanity. In entering the future dimension, he loses his time machine. He spends days searching for it thinking that the Elois had stolen it from him. Despite experiencing emotional turmoil, he is determined "to be calm and patient, to learn the way of the people, to get a clear idea of the method of my loss, and the means of getting materials and tools" (Wells, 1895). The effect of exercising rationality is that he applies scientific principles to the world around him to find the missing time machine. He is flexible enough to consider creating another machine in case he does not find the missing one.

Therefore, the Sphinx is depicted as a source of information to understand the universe in 802, 701 AD. However, the virtue of patience is necessary for a person to learn and understand the world before opening the sphinx. He notices a sphinxlike structure that leads him to the time machine. Therefore, Wells' travel to the underworld is a myth as per the common fictional tales. This myth bears symbolic meaning such that the Morlocks are workers exerting revenge on the Eloi who represent the rich.

In "Sphinx; or Science" from The Wisdom of the Ancients, Bacon personifies its figure with a gigantic and omniscient figure that knows everything about real life, about life in practice. He alludes that Sphinx has a relation to science, and one who tries to pass through Muses to Sphinx, in fact the transformation which is from contemplation to practice is very hard, painful and cruel, (Scafella, 1981).

"Sphinx is an elegant and a wise figure that has allusions to science, especially in its application to practical life… Sphinx proposes to men a variety of hard questions and riddles which she received from the Muses… when they pass from the Muses to Sphinx that is from contemplation to practice.   - Bacon (2016)

The same figure is depicted in front of the Time Traveler, "a gigantic Sphinx", "a colossal figure", "carved in some white stone", despite the rest of the world being invisible. The narrator observes that the humankind was no longer a master, but a simple animal among the animals, (Parrinder, 1995). Hence the idea of losing the human mastery would be a source of fear and horror that can be brought from the irony of the scientific romances (Parrinder, 1995). He notes that when face to face with the Sphinx, he feared that he would be seen as some old-world savage animal, a strange animal that no one could know (Parrinder, 1995).

Hence, the existence of the Sphinx is seen as a grotesque representation of Sphinx`s famous riddle of a "man". "I looked up again at the crouching white shape", it's associated with the word from Shelley`s prophecies (Parrinder, 1995). This "shape" can mean the shape of the future. The author also uncovers the Victorian practice of racism which is thought of as a myth. Wells' racial bias is present in his description of the undesirable Morlocks as "dark" creatures. The "dark" is feared by the Elois and represents evil for the cannibalistic creatures. Further, he uses the "nigga" derogatory term (Wells, p. 45). In essence, society could not be sustained by these marked divisions characterized by the oppression of one class of persons at the expense of others. (Wells, p. 49).

The myth of what the future might look like is disrupted at the end of the novel when the Time Traveler notices that the gap between the rich and the poor had steadily widened with the result that the poor toiling working for classes literally feasted on the Elois that represented the rich. The Elois on the other hand was too comfortable to respond to an uprising to protect themselves from the rising Morlocks. He describes the Elois as "…mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon…" (Wells, p. 60).

The Sphinx is also conceived as a metaphor that comes from Greek mythology. There are several stories of the Sphinx, but it's vital to remember that it asked a question and devoured those who couldn't correctly answer it. The White Sphinx monument is the first item the Time Traveler encounters when they arrive in the future. The Time Traveler soon finds that his Time Machine has vanished under the Sphinx, which poses a puzzle for him to solve: what the earth is going on? Not only that, but there's a danger the Morlocks will devour him if he can't solve the puzzle. To put it another way, the Sphinx may be there to tell the reader that the Time Traveler must figure out the riddle or perish.

Other stylistic figures of ice and flowers in the novella try to appease the reader, The narrator displays to the audience the two white flowers that Weena tucked into his pockets, which are "somewhat unlike very huge white mallows". After he finishes telling his tale, his dinner companions look at these flowers as possible proof that he genuinely did time travel because they are strange-looking flowers. However, the nameless narrator chooses to use the flowers as symbols in the epilogue. When he asks himself what these flowers represent, he comes up with the following response:

"And I have by me, for my comfort, two strange white flowers – shrivelled now, and brown and flat and brittle – to witness that even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man". (Wells, 1895) *(Epilogue.1)*

The Elois dress the Time Traveler in a flower necklace when they first encounter him, giving the future a somewhat Hawaiian feel. Then they start showering him with flowers. After he saves Weena from drowning, she also presents him with flowers. Therefore, the narrator's conviction that the flowers are associated with good things like friendship, welcome, kindness, and beauty appears warranted. The Morlocks birthed the Sphinx as a response to the oppression of the great order that exists among the Elois. The Sphinx is a symbol of the great disorder that reigns among men in the Under-world. At the end of the novel, the Time Traveler uses it as a route to leave the future. In the end, the myth of humanism is dismantled as an essentialist myth in the final analysis (Poldzk, p. 147). It is a posthumanism of less intellect translating to less sophistication as represented by the miniature creatures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that despite the futuristic ambition in *The Time Machine* to project technology to such an innovative aspect where it may replace the humans, we can still debunk that superstitious ambition to the extent that its role may be restricted to supplementary means, and as tools in proving the material goods. This diminishes the second assumption of a philosophical and scientific conception on the technology usage at humans' benefits by excessing their role. Overall, it can be said that change is inevitable and that people will continue to develop. Social, cultural, and political dimensions are impacted by its progression and development. Wells discussed how class differences result from the development of the affluent and the poor in society. If the class divisions persist, the future is gloomy. The critique of the present is important because it alerts people to the social repercussions of the growing wealth disparity. One illustration of the advancements achieved by humanity over time is technology.

The posthuman civilization nevertheless exhibits some of the essential human traits including love, caring, worry, hope, and friendship. The relationships amongst the Elois, which stand in stark contrast to the Morlocks' hostility and unfriendliness, promote these principles even more. These "humane" ideals, however, are incompatible with social divides that result in aggressive and resentful personalities (Hanström, 2013). An appearance of equality is necessary to preserve the overall harmony. The demand for technological development will thereafter be satisfied by humans thanks to "a perfect science," as Wells refer. Despite its variety and turmoil, humanity is at the forefront of technological advancement.

The lives of individuals will thereafter be controlled and directed by machines. This conclusion stems from the second premise made above, which ties human progress to creative innovation. Working, fully engaged people are necessary for the capitalistic system to continue its exploitation of the working class. Even while machines can perform the majority of the labor, people are better suited to manage them and are more adaptable to changing conditions. Therefore, it is essential that humans continue to exist as society develops and changes in order to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and prevent further deterioration and collapse.

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