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## Why Are We Afraid of the Unknown? H. G. Wells's Time Machine

Whilst reading this interesting book chock-full of metaphors, allusions and hidden deeper meaning. There were many details that could not be left unnoticed. One thing I noticed throughout the book is that there were many hidden metaphors to how our society is run and it's overall social structure. When the Time Traveler goes to the future and encounters the two different species that inhabit it he notices that one species is considerably unintelligent, relying on only basic gathering skills to survive. The Eloi are also lazy but kept well fed by the flourishing environment, due to the lack of "human" contact, and sheltered by seemingly already built structures that keep them safe from natural occurrences. However they are not safe from the Morlocks. The Morlocks are the other species that live in this future landscape. They do not depend on the environment for food and instead live underground in dark wells feeding on the flesh of the Eloi. This relationship may represent our society today in terms of the upper and lower classes. The rich are often seen as oblivious to the suffering of the lower class and have all the food and shelter that they need, maybe even an abundance of it. Whereas the poor lower class are stuck needing the assistance, protection and care of the rich which they may not get enough of.

The most interesting comment I made while reading the book is that the characters in the book are described by their mannerisms and level of knowledge, instead of the usual visual appearance you see in many other books. This may be used to increase the reader's perception of them as intelligent figures, by focusing not on the physical being, and instead the mind. The titles of individuals also seem to change around quite a bit. The titles are a huge aspect in this story, I believe, and are constantly changing due to their hosts' importance. In the introduction of this book all the scientists have names such as, "The Psychologist", "The Inventor" and "The Very Young Man." However there is one man who is constantly making obvious remarks to which the narrator (who I'm assuming is the Time traveler) says, "we'll just call him Filby" leading me to believe that "Filby" may not even be his real name. Or if any of the characters actually have real names. To support this idea even more, at some point in the book The Inventor's name switches to The Time Traveler. I believe that the titles in this book correspond to the most important detail about the character they belong to. In the beginning of the book the Inventor has created the Time Machine, which is the most important thing he has done thus far giving him the title of The Inventor. Whereas once he uses the machine to actually time travel, his time traveling becomes the most important thing about him, making his name change to the Time Traveler. This can be seen as well in our society today because we are known for what we have most accomplished or what stands out the most about us. If you are known most for your

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talent in dance then to your peers you are known as “that dancer guy”, and if you are known for being really good at basketball you are seen as “that one kid that’s really good at basketball”. Titles help define these different characters just as they help us define ourselves in real life.

The most resonant aspect of the book that I found was the scene where The Time Traveler goes underground to the Morlocks place of resonance and see’s them cooking one of the Eloi people for diner. This leads to a high speed chase as he tries to escape. “[The smell] of freshly shed blood was in the air. Some way down the central vista was a little table of white metal upon which a meal seemed to be spread...while I stood in the dark a hand touched mine; then some lank fingers came feeling over my face...I will confess I was horribly frightened...In a moment I was clutched again by several hands, and there was no mistake now that they were trying to draw me back.” I think this scene lingers in my mind the most due to it’s graphic details and the fear that the author portrays the Time Traveler of having. He does this by adding descriptions of events as well as feelings. It is also one of the first scenes with a lot of action which always happens to draw me in. A lot of people have been stuck in situations where they are not familiar with their surroundings or the people around them, and this leads to a uncomfortable feeling, making this scene easy to relate to for many. Maybe not in the specifics but in the general feeling of fear of the unknown.

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