The Time Machine Versus Marxism To Compare The Future Era To The Victorian Era

H.G Wells is known for his wide variety of political writings, his novels and stories, and his very committed stance as a socialist. John Partington wrote about Wells's political stance as a socialist and how it helped with the "abolition of class barriers'," and helped "free competition between individuals in society regardless of their social backgrounds." In 1895, Wells published his first novel, The Time Machine, which opened new doors of discussion and human imagination. In this novel, you meet a Time traveler who goes to the future to find that the humans have evolved into two races; the Elois and the Morlocks. A cultural witness is the value of the past, it is something we distinguish in the present so we are able to preserve into the future. The palace of green porcelain; inside the museum carried old artifacts used for survival which represents knowledge. This is where the time traveler found the matches, the light which portrays the intelligence. The Elois live near this palace filled with knowledge, with easy access. They could have easily walked inside to receive the knowledge they needed to stop the Morlock from eating them, but didn't because everything is handed to them. In this essay, I will be comparing the future era to the Victorian Era, I will connect The Time Machine to Marxism, I will be discussing Thomas More's Utopia, I will discuss gendering within this novel, and I will be comparing this novel to the current outburst of celebrities buying their children into university, VS the middle class trying to give their kids a better education.

This novel takes place in London during the Victorian Era, where the Time Traveler has a dinner party with characters who represent upper class professional men of the 1890s. The Time Traveler goes thousands of years into the future of London, where he finds a new yet strange race called the Elois. The Time Traveler becomes friends with the Elois, as they show him around their community. It is portrayed by H.G Wells that the Elois live in a very peaceful society in which they all sleep and eat together; however, they seem extremely childlike. H.G Wells eliminated the crime and poverty in the future that would typically be seen in the Victorian Era. "There were no signs of struggle, neither social nor economical struggle." (Page 41) They are portrayed by H.G Wells as if they have developed a way of life in which they do not require strength or intelligence to live. "Strength is the outcome of need; security sets a premium on feebleness." (Page 39) This is where politics from the Victorian era comes in to play in this novel. I feel in this novel, H.G Wells created the Elois society in a way to exemplify the downs of the political theory of communism. Although the society is made up entirely on equality, the creatures are handed everything, and so they are made up to be weak and stupid, as they do not need to work for anything. In the Victorian era in which both H.G Wells and the Time Traveler both lived in, the divide between the classes of rich and poor was significant. Soon after, the creatures called the Morlocks are introduced, where we find out they live underground and seem to be only nocturnal and the theory that they are labourers for the Elois is put to light. This is where the Time Traveler and I realized there are two different races in this society. "The truth dawned on me: that Man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals." (Page 60) The Time Traveler then begins to think about working conditions in the Victorian Era when it comes to the railway workers, and how their conditions have taken them away from the natural surface of their Earth. "Even now, does not an East-end worker live in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the Earth." (Page 63) H.G Wells takes us through an eye-opening contrast of criticizing communism with

the Elois into criticizing capitalism with the Morlocks. The struggle between the workers and the capitalists of the Victorian Era is an interesting contrast to the Morlocks relationship to the Elois in what was wrong with society. That being said, it becomes clear that the Morlock were indeed in charge in this societal situation as they were feared by the Eloi due to being their prey.

Next I want to discuss the gendering in this novel, as equality seems to be an important issue to H.G Wells, it only seems fitting. Wells gave the readers a look at upper class professional men, smart men, weak men, and savage men. With all of the insight of different men of the Victorian Era provided to the readers in this novel, the only female that was presented to the readers was portrayed as a damsel in distress. Given that the setting of this novel focuses on a distant future, this does not in any way depict a progression in society as far as roles for women are concerned. The character we meet is named Weena; the Time Traveler finds her drowning and saves her life. From here on out, she follows him around as his companion with gratitude for him saving her life. “She was exactly like a child. She wanted to be with me always. She tried to follow me everywhere.” (page 55) Although she is portrayed as a damsel in distress, H.G Wells also created Weena as the most caring and nurturing character in this novel. It seems as though she has the most personality out of anyone in the novel; she is set apart from the other Elois by her affection for the Time Traveler, and seemed to understand that darkness brought something bad. “But she dreaded the dark, dreaded shadows, dreaded black things. Darkness to her was the one thing dreadful.” (Page 56) The Time Traveler speaks about the Elois and explains how she was a pleasant substitute for the others he had encountered, as they did not leaving a good impression on him. “But Weena was a pleasant substitute.” (Page 58) I believe H.G Wells wanted Weena to symbolize that somethings change, however others don’t.

Thomas More’s Utopia; “The perfect imaginary world.” The future that H.G Wells created in this novel is the complete opposite of a utopia; it is a terrifying dystopia. Dystopia is defined as “An imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic.” The novel started off with a glimpse of a utopian and communist future, only to later find out that it is a perception of a dystopian capitalist future. The ideal utopia in this case, was a non governed society; there were no issues within the community due to the fact that the Eloi were laid back, weak minded beings. Something that really stood out to me as I was reading about this supposed utopia, was that none of the Eloi cared enough to notice one of their own drowning. “I was watching some of the little people bathing in a shallow, one of them was seized with cramp and began drifting downstream. The main current ran rather swiftly, but not too strongly for even a moderate swimmer. It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange deficiency in these creatures, when I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly crying little thing which was drowning before their eyes.” (page 54-55) Reading this brought me to question what the perfect imaginary world is supposed to look like. Of course it becomes clear while reading the novel that the future the Time Traveler goes to is not a utopia, but in fact a dystopia. H.G Wells does an excellent job to yet again criticize a very dysfunctional theory.

The Elois in this novel were to represent the upper class of what used to be human society, and the Morlock represent the oppressed working class; laboring for the Elois, providing them what they need to live. I wanted to compare this to the recent scandal of celebrities being caught paying universities to help their kids get into school, while a lower class has to face long jail time and high fees for changing their addresses to give their children a better education. Seeing this in the news, I saw the divide immediately of the two; I saw two social classes and two different races. To me, this is an example of what H.G Wells was trying to portray; a divide between the

upper class and the oppressed laborers, capitalism at its finest.

In conclusion, as the socialist he was, H.G Wells wrote an enticing science fiction to criticize and give the readers a look at the negatives of communism and capitalism and the inequality that was present during the his time in the Victorian Era that was a result of capitalism. He gave the readers a glimpse of what might happen in a communist utopia, and a look at what could be if history stayed on the course it was on.