Prominent Social Anxieties Adapted:

Three Film Adaptations of H.G. Wells’s *The Time Machine*

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Maxx Randell, candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in English, has presented a thesis titled, *Prominent Social Anxieties Adapted: Three Film Adaptations of H.G. Wells’s The Time Machine*, in an oral examination held on June 26, 2015. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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Abstract

My thesis is concerned with three different film adaptations of H.G. Wells’s classic novella *The Time Machine* (1895). These adaptations are George Pal’s feature *The Time Machine* (1960), Henning Schellerup’s telefilm *The Time Machine* (1978), and Simon Wells’s Hollywood blockbuster *The Time Machine* (2002). There are certain elements in the source text that I identify as important that a film should engage with if it is likely to be considered an adaptation of *The Time Machine*. Absolute fidelity to the source text is not a requirement, I believe, to be an effective adaptation, but adaptations do need to respect the source text, especially an admired classic like *The Time Machine*. Like *The Time Machine* itself, each adaptation is a product of the historical context that it was created in. Accordingly, each adaptation, to be effective, should update its characters and plot to engage with a prominent social anxiety that is relevant to its audience at the time of production. Despite this updating, each adaptation should pay respect to the source text, and prior effective adaptations where appropriate. While I conclude that all three adaptations achieve a measure of aesthetic success, this success decreases as we approach the present.
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Dedication

To my parents Julianne Smith and John William Earl Smith,

thank you for putting up with me through this trying time.
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The ruddy sunset set me thinking of the sunset of mankind. For the first
time I began to realize an odd consequence of the social effort in which
we are at present engaged. And yet, come to think, it is a logical
consequence enough. Strength is the outcome of need: security sets a
premium on feebleness. The work of ameliorating the conditions of life –
the true civilizing process that makes life more and more secure – had
gone steadily on to a climax. (*The Time Machine* 90)

In 1859, Charles Darwin published his treatise *On the Origin of Species*,
postulating evolution by natural selection. By 1895, many educated British citizens
accepted Darwin’s evolutionary theory. Schooled about “biology and the theory of
evolution under the direct and powerful influence of Thomas Huxley [Darwin’s leading
proponent]” (Loing 9), H.G. Wells had a profound understanding of evolution and its
various theoretical implications (Haynes 39-43). However, like his instructor Huxley,
Wells postulated that “there is almost always associated with the suggestion of advance
in biological phenomena an opposite idea …[an] evolutionary antithesis – degradation”
(“Zoological Retrogression” 246). When applied to humans, this degradation, or
degeneration, worked on both the biological and social levels. *The Time Machine* (1895)
explores Wells’s ideas about the “possible genetic degradation of the [human] species”
(Csala-Gáti 20) in the far distant future. For Wells, the achievement of a static utopia
would lead to stagnation for the human race, which in turn could lead to the degeneration
of the species (*The Time Machine* 92). In *The Time Machine* (hereafter TM), Wells made
public his fears about humanity’s potential destiny, one that he derived from the late Victorian society in which he was living.

The novella itself was sometimes received in an ambivalent manner. Often a reviewer would describe it in some fashion as a “powerful imaginative romance” (Wells, *TM* 261), but then note its depressing vision of evolutionary degeneration. In fact, many critics were entranced by Wells’s combination of up-to-date scientific knowledge, imaginative storytelling, and disturbing implications for humanity and all life on Earth.

The bulk of *TM* is a narrative by an unnamed Victorian scientist who builds a machine that can travel through the fourth dimension: time. The novella begins with a brief introduction to the basics of the science of time travel via a discussion about the three spatial dimensions (length, width, and depth), which leads to the idea that time is a fourth dimension, and one might travel through that dimension as one can travel through the other three (59-64). Why the Time Traveller builds his time machine is never directly addressed, but it is implied that he is a scientist and inspired by scientific curiosity about the destiny of mankind. In fact, the time machine is merely the vehicle by which Wells transports his readers to the far future, where he can explore his ideas about human degeneration.

After arriving in 802,701 AD, the Time Traveller begins exploring this future world, making inferences from Victorian evolutionary science in default of a guide. After encountering the Eloi, the Time Traveller theorizes about the “sunset of mankind” (90). Coming to the conclusion that mankind must have achieved a utopia and then stagnation and eventual degeneration must have set in as a result, the Time Traveller is dismayed. However, when he encounters the Morlocks, he is forced to revise his theory. When
Wells was composing *TM*, the Victorian class division was growing. The laborers were becoming more and more separated from the social elite, who did nothing but reap the benefits of the workers’ toil. Making a social comment about the dangers already underway in his own time, Wells has his Time Traveller postulate that the Victorian class division of the 1890s endured into the far future, forcing the growing split between laborer and elite to become permanent, and the two classes to split into different breeding stocks (108-11; 119-25).

In *TM*, the Victorian class division leads to the bifurcation of the human race over “hundreds of thousands of years because this allowed more time for the devolution of humanity into two distinct species” (Ruddick 343). Wells envisioned that, in the future, while the elite lived in luxury, they “drove the workers below ground and exploited their labour through the threat of suffocation and starvation” (Partington 17), which prevented the workers from rebelling. With this stable surface utopia achieved, the workers below ground would fall into a perpetual repetition of labor and the elite into apathy (Harack 33-5). Eventually, the two groups, separated into different breeding stocks, would speciate into the underground Morlocks and the surface dwelling Eloi. For Wells, 800,000 years was required to see the process take place. However, he was writing in the late Victorian age, when people believed the sun only had thirty million years of life left.

The surface Eloi are child-like creatures. They strike the Time Traveller as “very beautiful and graceful … but indescribably frail” (*TM* 81). The Time Traveller even compares them to people suffering from consumption (81). These Eloi have all their needs provided for them by the underground Morlocks and, as such, display no real survival skills. Conversely, the Morlocks are “dull white and [have] strange large
greyish-red eyes” and they run “on all fours” (107). They may have once been the working class, but now they are the masters (119-120). Additionally, as the Victorian elite metaphorically fed off the workers, the Morlocks literally feed off the Eloi (124-5).

The Wellsian Morlock/Eloi relationship has a predator/prey dynamic. However, because Wells relates this dynamic to “our cannibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago” (125), many people have taken that to mean that the Morlock/Eloi relationship involves cannibalism. But this is incorrect because for Wells humanity has separated biologically into two distinct species, and while the Eloi have a residue of human qualities, the Morlocks do not (107-8).

Losing his time machine shortly after arriving, Wells’s Time Traveller eventually manages to regain it. After his final fight with the Morlocks, he pushes forward in time and travels to what Victorian scientists – like William Thomson, Balfour Stewart, Camille Flammarion, and others – believed would be the end of the world. Now thirty million years in the future from the Victorian era, the Time Traveller witnesses the sun dying and the Earth populated only by crab-like creatures (144-8). Upon seeing this, the Time Traveller returns to his present to relate his tale to his skeptical dinner guests, hoping to make them believe in its truth, but most do not. At the end of the novella, the Time Traveller disappears into time for good, his destination unknown.

There is little optimism in Wells’s novella because the big picture grows darker as the Time Traveller works through his various theories about the “sunset of mankind” (90). As a scientist, the Time Traveller generates many hypotheses about the future world he finds himself in, each one more pessimistic than the last. True to the scientific method, when he is wrong he admits it and changes his hypotheses accordingly.
Additionally, he presents his dinner guests with all his evidence as he had gathered it. They reject it, but, admittedly, it is hard to believe him and stay optimistic about human destiny. So, why has this novella been adapted to film three times?

Adaptation theorist Robert Stam applies a metaphor to adaptation theory that he borrows from Darwin’s theory of evolution: “if mutation is the means by which the evolutionary process advances, then we can also see filmic adaptations as ‘mutations’ that help their source novels ‘survive’” (3). But *TM* is a classic, by which I mean a work that has long been admired in the literary world and has never gone out of print. As such, does this classic need film adaptations to survive? Moreover, in Hollywood, “a romantic interest was considered an absolute necessity for a film to be financially successful” (Hickman 70) and a happy ending is an essential requirement: Wells’s novella has no such romantic interest and its theme is depressing. Why then has the Wellsian novella been adapted at all to film, let alone repeatedly?

*T*M is specifically about the post-Darwinian anxiety that human evolution might lead to degeneration instead of to perfection at a time when Victorian confidence in progress was at its height. More than fifty years later, can a film adaptation of *TM* be faithful to the source text? Faithful here is not absolute fidelity to the source text, but respecting it enough to utilize certain elements found within the source text. Thomas C. Renzi postulates that Wells’s “what-if” premises” have the ability to “press our primal buttons … [so] we might be able to become invisible or grow into noble giants or defy the barriers of time and gravity” (xii). But is this fantastical experience enough? Can a late nineteenth-century scientific romance be effectively translated into twentieth- and twenty-first-century films?
An answer to this question may be found in adaptation theory, which deals with how a story in one medium might be translated into a very different one. Stam explains that “adaptations engage the discursive energies of their time, they become a barometer of the ideological trends circulating during the moment of production” (45). The implication of Stam’s idea is that an adaptation, in addressing contemporary social anxieties, ultimately takes on themes from the time it is created. Meanwhile, Linda Hutcheon, in A Theory of Adaptation (2006), claims that “the appeal of adaptations … lies in their mixture of repetition and difference” (114), or “repetition with variation” (4), which is to say that an adaptation gives an audience a familiar experience (it recalls the source text and any prior effective adaptations), but is also sufficiently different from the source and previous adaptations to be interesting. Stam and Hutcheon together offer a hint about how to judge the effectiveness of an adaptation.

I do not determine effectiveness by blockbuster status, box office returns, or fidelity to the source text. In my view, an effective film adaptation of TM contains a coherent narrative (a storyline that contains little to no flaws that detract from the audience’s experience) that enables the film to stand alone, yet respects the source text. In the case of TM, to be respectful the film adaptations must contain certain elements associated with the source text, but still contain contemporary elements popular and relevant enough to be produced in the first place.

The first element is the motif of vehicular travel into time, because this allows the adaptor to visually represent time travel and, thus, make what is actually impossible plausible. The vehicular time machine also allows the time traveller to stop at different time periods, so as to explore the origins of the major social anxiety that the adaptation
addresses. The second element is that the TM adaptation must offer a coherent reason for the Eloi/Morlock split in the future that embodies this social anxiety. Finally, since box office is also an important element of the film’s success, the adaptation must allow the protagonist to resolve the Eloi/Morlock conflict (producing the Hollywood happy ending). The presence of each of these elements conduces to the likelihood that a film will be an effective adaptation of TM.

The three film adaptations of TM that I will analyze are: George Pal’s 1960 feature, Henning Schellerup’s 1978 telefilm (i.e. made-for-television film), and Simon Wells’s 2002 Hollywood blockbuster. While each film is not equally effective, all are thoughtful translations of Wells’s novella into the multi-track, audiovisual medium of film. Each of these adaptations, produced a generation apart, arise from a different historical context in which different social anxieties prevailed. H.G. Wells used the growing Victorian class divide to develop his ideas about human evolutionary degeneration in the distant future, ideas very specific to the late nineteenth century. Each film adaptation replaces these Victorian anxieties with more contemporary anxieties derived from their historical context. Pal in 1960 addresses the fear that the Cold War between the USA and the Soviets will result in nuclear annihilation. Schellerup in 1978 addresses the fear of an American military-industrial complex spiraling out of control. Simon Wells in 2002 addresses the fear that human greed will lead to environmental destruction.

I will place each film in its historical context by examining the social anxiety that shaped and influenced the central theme of the adaptation. Using Stam’s “barometer” as a basis for analyzing each adaptation, I will illustrate how the film addresses these fears
and how the filmmaker made changes to Wells’s scenario so as to accommodate the new material. The different reasons each adaptation offers for the bifurcation of the human race into the surface Eloi and the underground Morlocks are the key to understanding these anxieties.

Often the Eloi and Morlocks in the films have very little in common with the ones in the Wellsian source text, yet the relation between these two post-human species still provides the means by which each film is able to address its contemporary social anxiety. The Eloi and Morlocks come to represent respectively a positive and negative reflection of humanity at the moment of the film’s production. The Eloi represent the hope for humanity despite the fear, while the Morlocks symbolize the worst outcome of the fear. Additionally, the three adaptations’ ability to develop a romantic liaison between the protagonist and an Eloi woman provides the necessary element of broad popular appeal that allows the films to be produced in the first place.

Although the reason for the bifurcation of the human race is different in each case, each film adaptation does address a contemporary anxiety. Thomas C. Renzi, the only critic who has examined all three adaptations in detail, considers Schillerup’s telefilm merely “a remake of Pal’s film” (20), while he views Simon Wells’s film as failing to cohere due to its many flaws (42-3). He considers Pal’s adaptation to be the most coherent and least flawed narrative of the three. I differ from Renzi by giving each film equal examination and by examining each film as a whole, while Renzi examines only the differences between the source text and film through a narrow selection of scenes.
While Renzi’s analysis is thoughtful, I think there is more to say about how the later two adaptations are in conversation with their predecessors and the source text. Furthermore, Renzi does not deal at any length with the historical context within which the later adaptations were created. I will show that Schellerup’s telefilm, while owing much to Pal’s adaptation, can be seen as a stand-alone adaptation rather than a mere remake. Finally, I disagree with Renzi's conclusion – and that of several other critics – that Simon Wells’s film fails to cohere. While his narrative is riddled with inconsistencies, in my view it does cohere sufficiently to address a major social anxiety of its time. By this I mean, the storyline manages to be convincing enough and believable enough that Simon Wells’s ecological message still manages to be understood.

Beyond Renzi, there is little existing detailed critical analysis of Schellerup’s and Simon Wells’s adaptations. In fact, even Pal’s well-known film has rarely been carefully analyzed. Most critics choose a single thread within the film and analyze that alone, often resulting in a focus on a narrow selection of scenes. What follows is a detailed analysis of each adaptation in chronological order of their release, suggesting that as society evolves, so have the fears about the future of humanity. I hope to show that not only is each adaptation a “barometer of the ideological trends” (Stam 45), but also that each successive adaptation respects both prior adaptations and the source text, resulting in the “repetition with variation” (Hutcheon 4) that characterizes multiple adaptations of the same source text.
Chapter 1

We may conclude that the dropping of the atom bombs was not so much the last military act of the Second World War, as the first major operation of the cold diplomatic war with Russia. (Blackett 139)

The world changed forever on August 6, 1945, and the magnitude of that change was confirmed on August 9, 1945. These two dates saw the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima and the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki. World War II had already ended in Europe, and Russia entered the fight against the Japanese on August 8, 1945. One of America’s reasons for dropping the atomic bomb was to make sure that Russia was aware of its nuclear capacity (Franklin 151-2). When World War II ended, no one had expected Russia to command forces that rivaled, and even surpassed, those of the United States. So, when the ‘cold’ geopolitical war for the fate of the entire world began, America made sure that their Communist rivals knew the strength of the West. But what exactly did the USA fear about the Soviets?

Staighton Lynd explains that “for the first time the challenge of authoritarian socialism to democratic capitalism was backed by sufficient power to be an ever-present political and military threat” (9). However, American propaganda did not promote Russia as second only to America in economic and military power, but as a threat to the American way of life (Schuman 98). In fact, Bruce Franklin points out that “the free flow of knowledge vital for citizens to make informed choices” (146) about the Soviets was restricted. By 1949, American propaganda had reduced the Soviet threat to one element: nuclear attack. For the first time in human history, humankind had the means to eradicate all life on Earth. It took four years after the end of World War II for the Soviets to finally
obtain their first nuclear bomb, creating a nuclear arms race. This race resulted in the development of the far more destructive thermonuclear (or hydrogen) bomb in 1951 by America and “the first Soviet H-bomb in 1953” (Seed 95).

In the intervening time, 1945-1949, before the Soviets developed atomic technology, American propaganda drilled into the average citizen that the Soviets and communism were to be feared. The propaganda used the following ideas: “that the Russians had treacherously broken their war-time agreements” (Alstyne 27); negotiating with the Soviets was impossible because the Soviets used “political organization, infiltration, and bribery than diplomacy” (Reston 12) to “receive disproportionate influence” (Karpovich 44) in governments; the Soviets were trying to spread their influence everywhere (Brzezinski 49; Lynd 7-8); the Soviets wanted the State to rule the individual (Reston 19); and while “America [was] the generous and wise leader of the free World … communist rule, in contrast, [was] always unpopular and dictatorial” (Levering 8).

After 1949, the US feared that the Soviets would use their atomic weapons on American soil because Americans were told that the Soviets used threats of military action on smaller countries if political infiltration failed. Furthermore, Americans were informed that the Soviets would only stop developing atomic weaponry once America had disarmed all of their own nuclear weapons. So, then, American nuclear arms became shields against the Soviets, who were supposedly developing their own for conquest. Franklin explains it quite succinctly: “the atom was our friend, the Russians were our enemy” (180).
On October 4, 1957, the Soviets launched the first manmade satellite into Earth’s orbit: Sputnik. Until this point, America was proud of its technological dominance, but now “the Reds had gotten unmistakably ahead” (Weisberger 178). The American government blamed the “increasingly rebellious Youth, perceived by the nation as essentially hedonistic” (Berger 177) for not joining in the fight against communism; while the Soviets proclaimed that they were “confident of the victory of the socialist system because it [was] a more progressive system than the capitalist system” (Khrushchev 80) and proven so by Sputnik.

Americans suddenly realized not only that the Soviets were ahead of them, but also that the Soviets actually had the ability to strike American soil with thermonuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles (Blackett 52; Weisberger 179). When the Soviets gained thermonuclear weapons coupled with space technology, the knowledge that they were able to annihilate any American city with a push of a button was spread quickly. By the late 1950s, it was feared that an all-out war between the Soviets and America would result in the extinction of all life on Earth. The fear was not alleviated by peace talks between the two superpowers, for both governments were telling their own people that Communism and Capitalism were so fundamentally different that ‘peaceful co-existence’ would never be possible (Daniels 67; Mosley 87-94). Thus, war seemed inevitable.

During this period, science fiction authors and filmmakers went about depicting the worst-case apocalyptic scenarios on paper and on screen. Science fiction cinema went about depicting the end through movies like The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951), The War of the Worlds (1953), and Day the World Ended (1955). The 1960 adaptation of H.G. Wells’s TM directed by George Pal (birth name György Pál Marczincsák, 1908-
1980) was another one of these depictions. Pal was born in Cegléd, Hungary. He made a name for himself in animation in the 1920s and moved to Germany, where he created a new type of animated short film for which he “coined the word Puppetoon” (Hickman 20). These Puppetoons used stop-motion animation, a process of sequentially photographing puppets “in slightly different positions to develop a single movement” (Seton 13); six of them earned Academy Award nominations (Hickman 28-9). However, when the Nazis came into power Pal fled because he was “being investigated by the Gestapo in 1933” for being Hungarian because the Nazis were suspicious of foreigners (Hickman 19). Eventually, Pal would end up in America. He hated the Nazis “for what they did to that country [Germany]. I hate any kind of ism, any totalitarian system, be it fascism, communism, or any other ism” (Hickman 26, emphasis in original) and this was reflected in both his Puppetoons and his live-action films.

When Pal arrived in America and started making his animated shorts there, he addressed the Nazi takeover of Europe. In Tulips Shall Grow (1942), two Dutch lovers are attacked by an invading Screwball army. This army was “the faceless, inhuman, mechanical (literally made of nuts and bolts), ‘sieg-heil’-ing [Nazis] … that could mechanically exterminate innocent lives” (AWN.com). Tulips Shall Grow expressed Pal’s hatred of dictatorships, but it was not Pal’s only political piece. Pal “began the interest in postwar science-fiction film(s) with his pseudo-documentary, Destination Moon [(1950)]” (Berger 179) and continued it in movies like The War of the Worlds (1953).

Eleven years after Tulips Shall Grow, Pal’s stop-motion animation skill in representing the Martian invasion in Byron Haskin’s film adaptation of The War of the Worlds would draw the attention of the H.G. Wells estate. Though the Martian invasion
in *The War of the Worlds* would have been an excellent means to convey the communist threat, there were problems: in the film, America’s nuclear bombs failed to destroy the Martians; and “the Martians were killed by disease bacteria” and not man (Hickman 65).

Pal had been in contact with Frank Wells, son of H.G. Wells, in regards to the production of *The War of the Worlds* and was given the opportunity to pick any of Wells’s other works for film adaptation (*Colemanzone*). Pal chose H.G. Wells’s novella *TM* (1895). He believed that the novella “had the most possibilities” (Hickman 113) for him to work with “state-of-the-art special effects” (Williams 131), and would allow him, as the director, to articulate his own political views. Additionally, the storyline afforded Pal the opportunity to explore the fear of human extinction by nuclear war, but also to provide a hopeful ending. The novella ended pessimistically, but Pal wanted to express hope for a human future despite the immediate fear.

Script writing for *The Time Machine* began in 1955, but it would take four years until the project would be produced. One of the first problems that Pal faced was deciding whether or not to update the movie to the present as Haskin and he had done for *The War of the Worlds*. Ultimately, Pal decided not to update the adaptation, partly because of the theme of time travel. Pal wanted his protagonist, H. George Wells (Rod Taylor) to start “in the past at the turn of the century,” and show “incidents the audience knows did happen” (Hickman 120) to help convince them that time travel was possible (Williams 130-31). However, time travel was not the only reason why Pal began in 1899 Victorian London. Adaptation theorist Robert Stam states that adaptations “engage the discursive energies of their time, they become a barometer of the ideological trends circulating during the moment of production” (45) and Pal’s adaptation does exactly that.
In fact, this is the other reason the film begins in 1899: Pal wanted to illustrate the ever-increasing destructive power of war.

The movie opens with a montage of clocks floating in blank space and this sequence ends with the foreshadowing of what is to come: the destruction of London’s Big Ben in a nuclear flash. Just after discussing what the three spatial dimensions are and watching a demonstration of a miniature model of the time machine, George and his four Victorian companions turn to Pal’s theme: war. These companions are David Filby (Alan Young), Dr. Philip Hillyer (Sebastian Cabot), Anthony Bridewell (Tom Helmore), and Walter Kemp (Whit Bissell), and it is mostly Dr. Hillyer who questions everything.

Hillyer points out to George that the time machine has no economic value and that the country needs scientists, like George, to concentrate on winning the current war:

George, there’s a war on in South Africa. The Boers are putting up a pretty stiff fight. Nah, George the country needs inventors like you. Now, I can put you in touch with the war office if you wish. (0:16:04-0:16:17)

This comment is later reinforced by the newspaper that George holds open at an article entitled “Boer Army Has Won Another Victory.” What Hillyer is actually suggesting is that George help invent some super-weapon that will ensure victory for the British in South Africa (Williams 132). Hillyer’s comments prompt George’s response and departure. When everyone but Filby leaves, George explains his disillusionment:

I don’t care much for the time I was born into. It seems people aren’t dying fast enough these days. They call upon science to invent new more efficient weapons to depopulate the Earth. (0:19:37-0:19:49)
This scene is a substantial departure from the source text because in the novella we are never given a reason why the Time Traveller builds and uses his time machine (other than implied scientific curiosity). This new reason for George’s departure allows Pal to address a current social anxiety, as H.G. Wells did in his novella, while hinting at a hope. George travels into the future because he is sick of war, implying that he hopes to find a more peaceful world.

In Wells’s novella, the Time Traveller makes one jump into the far distant future of 802,701 AD. Pal deviates drastically from the novella by having George make three important stops on his journey to the same date. Each stop illustrates the growing destructive power of war from the Boer War onwards. With each war, technology increases the risk of total annihilation. George’s first stop is in 1917 during World War I, where for the first time the entire world is involved; his second stop is in 1940 during World War II, when air supremacy is helping to turn the tide; and his third stop is in 1966, the near future of the film’s release, when nuclear-armed satellites threaten all life on Earth. However, before George can travel through time, Pal has to make time travel a believable concept in the mind of his audience.

Pal used contemporary stop-motion animation and time-lapse photography objects to make his audience believe that time travel was possible. The first time, George travels only a few hours into the future and we only see the after-effects of his travelling: the clock has advanced and a candle has burnt halfway down. However, when George next moves, the sun rotates rapidly through the sky and a snail races around a flower pot, whose flowers are visibly blooming. Pal shows real living flowers blooming in seconds
instead of hours. Then Pal shows an actual sundial with the sun’s shadow speeding across it before the flowers close for the night.

When George peers through the windows of his laboratory to the street, he watches people race through their daily activities. The focus shifts to a feminine mannequin dressed in 1899 fashion. When George forces his machine to go faster, the sun and moon move in seconds through the sky in a blur. However, what truly helps the audience to believe in George’s time travel and make it real is the mannequin. George watches, as does the audience from his perspective, the mannequin’s clothing change with the times, its hemlines going up and down in real time. People are watching what they already know has happened and “by that time the people believed it” (Hickman 120).

George’s next stop is September 13, 1917. His laboratory has been boarded up and dust and cobwebs cover everything. When he ventures out through his disheveled house, he soon meets James Filby (Alan Young), son of his friend David Filby, across the street. Through their brief conversation, George learns that David died in a war a year earlier. He also learns that England and France have been at war with Germany since 1914. Given the amazing technological advancement of the vehicle that George spots James getting out of, it does not take long for George to extrapolate the nature of this war. Additionally, like the scene in George’s laboratory, this time in history is an era the audience is familiar with and, as such, it is helpful in creating the illusion that time travel is possible. However, disillusioned once again and heavy-hearted, George travels on into the future.
George’s next stop is June 19, 1940, during the London blitz. He witnesses anti-aircraft guns shooting up into the sky, tethered barrage balloons, and planes being shot down. George reflects that his last stop was “23 years ago and the war with Germany was still waging, now in the air with flying machines” (0:37:37-0:37:44). George did not see airplanes in his previous stop, nor had they been invented in his time, so now they become the factor that helps George to understand “the truth of the matter” (0:37:47-0:37:48) that humanity is involved in a new level of warfare. George pushes on in time to see the outcome.

By this momentary stop in 1940, Pal is illustrating a Cold War theme derived from World War II: the destructive force of air power on cities and civilians. Those who controlled the skies most likely would win the war. This was a common belief during World War II and it was a great fear in the Cold War (Blackett 32-9). Fission weapons were heavy, but fusion (hydrogen) weapons were lighter. Until Sputnik arrived on the scene, atomic and thermonuclear rocket attacks were fantasies in the minds of science fiction writers and military strategists. When Sputnik came to fruition, America realized the nature of the balance of power and was forced to analyze not only their military, but also their entire culture. They found that Russians were encouraging their youths to excel in science and mathematics at all cost, while American youths were becoming lazy and rebellious (Berger 176-8; Weisberger 177-9).

George’s next stop is August 18, 1966. He stops in the place where his house and laboratory used to be, but now it is a park, serene and peaceful. Why stop here? He stops because he hears weird sounds, air-raid sirens, and shortly thereafter, he witnesses people panicking and rushing towards an underground shelter. He meets an elderly James Filby
and is told that the air-raid sirens were not “built for their aesthetic value … but to warn silly young fools … to get into the shelter” (0:40:21-0:40:24). Filby informs George that a thermonuclear satellite has targeted London and they watch it approach. George makes it back to his time machine, just before a nuclear blast causes a volcanic fissure eruption to overwhelm London. He laments that a city that took centuries to build was destroyed in an instant. He pushes on into the future just as his time machine is encased in lava.

The important aspect of George’s third stop is the weapon that brings about the explosion: a nuclear satellite. Roger Berger points out that “‘atomic satellites’ – [militarized] Sputniks – the very symbol of [America’s] failed education system and of Soviet domination in the world” (181) brought about the end of the world. With Sputnik’s launch in 1957 and Explorer’s launch in 1958, the space-based nuclear arms race became a reality. A new fear was a ‘push-button’ war in which one side could launch thermonuclear warheads from satellites or thermonuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles from their home territory and destroy the enemy, though this anxiety was only beginning in 1958 when Pal began filming. The overarching fear was still human extinction by nuclear war, but the total mechanization of the means was just beginning in the late 1950s, and would not truly be realized until after Pal had filmed his movie.

However, atomic theorists like P.M.S. Blackett believed that radioactive fallout and biological and ecological devastation would kill more people than the atomic explosions themselves (Fear, War, and the Bomb 69-72, 118). As such, Pal’s satellite weapon causes a volcanic fissure to rupture. This fissure eruption devastates London and encases George and his time machine in lava. As George continues to travel forward in time the solidified lava erodes and he finds the world green again. Pal’s stop-motion
animation expertise comes into play again as the audience witnesses the landscape change around George, plants come and go, a structure in the distance rises up, and a brick wall builds itself up in the background. As in the novella, George stops too quickly in 802,701 AD and is thrown from his machine. When he places his machine upright, he examines the statue of a sphinx that he now finds himself in front of.

In Wells’s novella, the Eloi appear shortly after the Time Traveller straightens his time machine. However, Pal deviates from Wells at this moment. Instead of meeting the Eloi right away, George ventures through a luxurious landscape of strange plants, exotic fruits, and thick shrubbery; in a voiceover, he claims that “it would be no paradise if it belonged to me alone” (0:47:40-0:47:44). Then he comes across a compound, the outer appearance of which is ruinous, though the inside is well maintained. George shouts from the center, hoping to find some company, but receives only his echo back. The score expresses George’s dread while his anxious physical expression reflects his voiceover. All of this is supposed to suggest to us that humanity is extinct and that George is alone in this paradise as he frantically exits the building and continues his trek through the wilderness.

In Wells’s novella, the Time Traveller meets the Eloi right after he lands in 802,701 AD. They invite him back to their compound for dinner. By the time the Time Traveller saves Weena from drowning, he has lost his time machine. The Time Traveller remarks that “on the third day of my visit … I made a friend – of a sort” (TM 102), indicating the length of time he has spent with the Eloi already. However, in Pal’s film George’s first interaction with the Eloi is when he saves Weena (Yvette Mimieux) from drowning.
In one of the most startling departures from Wells’s novella, Pal begins to illustrate the horrors of this post-apocalyptic world, when George heroically saves one of the female Eloi (later identified as Weena) from being swept downstream and drowning. None of the other Eloi will do anything but watch; George must run from the woods and dive in to rescue her. There have been only a few quick glimpses of the Eloi so far in this scene; however, when Weena raises her head and stands up, now wrapped in George’s coat, we see the Eloi clearly: all are blonde haired, all the men are well-built and appear to be athletic, all the women are slender with flawless skin, all seem to be young, and all seem to be without any physical defect. At first glance, Pal’s Eloi seem a disturbing throwback to the Nazi physical ideal of the Aryan master-race (Bendersky 137). The true horror, though, is in their apathy: they watch uncaringly as Weena almost drowns, Weena does not thank George for saving her, and the Eloi ignore George even after Weena invites him to dinner (which comes only after he follows them uninvited back to their compound).

Pal’s Eloi represent what the Cold War Soviets were referring to as the American bourgeois class, the elite class that took advantage of the proletariat. In Cold War ideology, the Soviet leaders represented the capitalist nations as the bourgeois class, who wanted for nothing because they exploited the workers, and to the Americans their own youth seemed to support this view (Franklin 181; Weisberger 179). The Eloi have no wants, no real worries (other than the fear of the dark), they play all day, they do not work, they physically look like a superior/master race, and they have no concept of the world outside of them.
After World War II, many Western youths seemed indifferent to the generation that heroically fought in the war. They began to despise the world their parents lived in, one they associated with death and destruction. Additionally, American schools declined in aptitude as complacency drove younger students away from learning science and technology because the American government had promoted their nuclear shield too well. All of this is reflected in Pal’s scene in which two male Eloi have to only reach down to save Weena, but instead just watch her get swept down the river. Pal’s Eloi then also represent this apathetic youth culture that arose after World War II and this apathy is addressed repeatedly throughout the film.

For example, in Pal’s version of the novella’s Palace of Green Porcelain, George is shown the books that the Eloi still have. He cannot believe what he is seeing as he opens one book and it falls to dust in his hands. He rages at the unnamed Eloi male:

> What have you done? Thousands of years of building and rebuilding, creating and recreating so you can let it crumble to dust. A million years, the sensitive men dying for their dreams, for what? So you can swim and dance and play. (1:00:00-1:00:23)

This is an echo of George’s earlier sentiment about thousands of years of civilization erased in a single moment when the nuclear satellite destroys London. However, it is also a reflection of the filmmaker’s frustration over the contemporary American youth. Their apathy about history, about learning at all, is addressed. The Eloi have no concept of history and, as such, everything around them is falling into dust quite literally.

Wells’s Time Traveller loses his time machine to the Morlocks before he meets Weena. In fact, he tries to get the Eloi to help him open up the White Sphinx, but they are
too terrified. However, when Pal’s time traveller returns to his machine, he is alone. The score conveys George’s dread and terror at the fact that he is stuck in the present moment and that his machine is gone. For suspense, Pal chooses not to have George run back to the Eloi compound, as Wells’s Time Traveller does, to accuse the Eloi of taking his time machine. Instead, Pal jumps to the Morlock encounter, and a new role for George to play.

After obtaining only a glimpse of a Morlock as it runs off, George is startled by Weena’s return at dusk. When darkness deepens, George once again saves Weena, this time from being dragged away by a Morlock, further cementing his role as hero. This scene also marks George as a Prometheus figure when he builds a fire. The Eloi have no concept of fire (or technology) and it is the means by which he scares off the Morlocks. Weena now tells him that the Morlocks make all their clothing, provide all their food, and that the Eloi must follow the Morlocks’ commands. The audience sees what John Huntington considers the essence of the Morlock/Eloi binary opposition: oppressor/oppressed (54). It is not a coincidence that the Eloi and the Morlocks are considered in this fashion because for the fifteen years before the film’s release, America had been promoting the Soviets as oppressors trying to force their will upon the Free World.

George’s role as leader begins to present itself in this scene as well. As Weena and George grow physically closer around a small fire, he comes to two conclusions about the Eloi and himself:

The one characteristic that distinguished man from the animal kingdom was the spirit of self-sacrifice. I think all your people have it really, it just needs someone to reawaken it … Man’s past is mainly a grim struggle for
survival, but there have been moments when a few voices have spoken out … I refuse to believe it’s dead and gone. We’ve had dark ages before and this is just another one of them … I’m only a tinkering mechanic, but there has to be that spark in one of your people. If only I could kindle that spark. (1:07:47-1:09:51)

It is important to note that George has already started to associate himself with the Eloi when he says that “we’ve had dark ages before.” But he sees himself as the igniter of the spirit he believes they still have because Weena ventured out to help him despite her fear of the night. If Weena can develop a concern for George, maybe he can inspire concern in the others. As such, he wants to be their leader and help the Eloi overcome the Morlocks. George will be the force that Pal believes is needed to rouse the apathetic youth into action to fight against the oppressors (Berger 177). This idea becomes very important later in the film.

The following day, Weena takes George to the air vents that deliver oxygen to the Morlocks and then to the talking rings. Back in Pal’s Palace of Green Porcelain, Weena shows George how the talking rings work. These rings, whose creation is unexplained, explicitly state Pal’s central theme as well as explain the immediate cause of the bifurcation of the human species, and the development of the Morlock/Eloi relationship:

[Ring 1:] The war between the East and West, which is now in its 326th year, has at last come to an end. There is nothing left to fight with and few of us left to fight. The atmosphere has become so polluted with deadly germs that it can no longer be breathed. There is no place on this planet that is immune. The last surviving factory for the manufacture of oxygen
has been destroyed. Stockpiles are rapidly diminishing and when they are gone, we must die.

[Ring 2:] My name is of no consequence, the important thing you should know is that I am the last who remembers how each of us, man and woman, made his own decision. Some chose to take refuge in the great caverns and find a new way of life far below the Earth’s surface. The rest of us decided to take our chances in the sunlight, small as those chances might be. (1:11:37-1:12:56)

The first ring illustrates Blackett’s idea that the dropping of the first atomic bomb was in fact the first tactical operation of the Cold War (139). The second ring illustrates how nuclear holocaust forced a choice upon the human race, causing it to speciate into the surface Eloi and the underground Morlocks (Franklin 151, 156). Both rings and their backstory are a significant deviation from Wells because neither appear within the original novella, but are crucial to Pal’s adaptation because they fill in the missing information that the Wellsian Time Traveller provides his audience. Interestingly enough, Pal never addresses why the Morlocks mutate physically into subhumanity, while the Eloi do not.

George quickly comes to the conclusion that he must descend into the airshafts to regain his time machine. When he does this, the air-raid sirens go off and Weena, who had followed him to the vents, wanders towards the sphinx in a trance. In fact, “the Eloi, conditioned by millennia of war” (Wasson 193) wander in a trance-like state because they know no better. When the sirens stop, the doors to the sphinx close and many of the Eloi, including Weena, are trapped inside. When the sphinx closes and George cannot get
in to save Weena, he becomes enraged as the others do nothing. George is informed that those who go in never come back. He is forced to follow through with his original plan and descend into the airshafts. When he reaches the Morlock home, he realizes the true nature of the creatures.

Pal’s Morlocks represent three different threats: political oppression, the Soviet communists, and mutated humanoids. Keith Williams speculates that “the Morlocks’ mutation is due to radioactive fall-out (metaphorically, if not literally) rather than a socio-biological change” as in the novella (133). This is implausible since the rings informed us that the surface was polluted, implying that the underground was not. However, Pal keeps the Eloi human-like to preserve hope for the future of the human race. Like Wells’s Morlocks, Pal’s Morlocks only come out at night, but are given monstrous faces, claws and glowing eyes; they are futuristic werewolves, the legendary creatures that fed on human flesh. To say the Morlocks are cannibalistic is a misnomer because that would be endowing them with human qualities that they obviously lack: they are clearly a different subhuman species.

Huntington comments that since Pal’s theme is the Cold War, then “the conflict is … in the opposition of capitalism and communism. The clear hint is that the Morlocks are, loosely, the Russians” (54). Moreover, if the Eloi are the bourgeois, then the Morlocks must be the proletariat, the working class which is the foundation of communism. The Morlocks make everything for the Eloi so it is easy to associate the two.

Concurrently, once the Soviets gained nuclear technology, American propaganda spread the idea that the Soviets could not be trusted because as they were asking for
peace and demanding American nuclear disarmament, while they were in fact building
their own nuclear arsenal. The Morlocks employ such fear tactics to keep the Eloi in line
by using what was once a safety warning (the air-raid sirens) as the means of luring the
Eloi to their deaths. Pal uses both the Morlocks and their fear tactics “to warn man to
find alternatives to war before he annihilates himself” (Renzi 4).

A confrontation arises between George and the Morlocks. Now George once
again becomes the hero. Given his appearance in the movie – as well as on the theatrical
poster – of a hero dressed in a “waistcoat and tight trousers,” he is reminiscent of the
“Western gunslinger” (Williams 134) that tamed the West, but with a torch instead of a
pistol. He battles monstrous Morlocks to save Weena, the damsel in distress, and the
other Eloi. He is fighting evil for the good of humankind. His leadership role, a typical
extension of the hero role because he inspires action and leads by example, arises just as
he desired, while sitting around the campfire talking to Weena that first night.

During the fight, George loses his torch/club and is forced to wrestle with one of
the Morlocks, who manages to gain the upper hand and begins strangling him. One of the
male Eloi sees this and finally takes action: he forms a fist and attacks the Morlock.
Others quickly join in and everyone escapes. George has once again become Prometheus,
that “someone to reawaken” (1:08:09) the idea of self-sacrifice within the Eloi. With the
launch of Sputnik and the Soviets gaining more political influence, many believed (like
Pal) that the slacker youth culture needed to be roused into action (Berger 177). In one
brief moment, the Eloi shed their complacency and join in to resist the “barbarism and
oppression” of the Morlocks, also cementing George as their leader (Wasson 194-6).
However, a hero must have a love interest. The Morlocks’ home is burning and their prisoners are freed and, as everyone rejoices in their newfound freedom, Weena and George begin their romance. Showing her desire to keep George around and to be with him, Weena asks, “How do they wear their hair?” (1:31:18-1:31:20), referring to women of his time. Weena “becomes coy and acts jealous” (Renzi 19) when George seems uncertain about his future with her. Then, not inches from his face, she asks if she would be pretty in his time. He responds in the affirmative and they lean in for a kiss. The kiss is prevented, but the romance has begun, which is a deviation from Wells’s novella. The Wellsian Eloi are “slight creature[s] – perhaps four feet high – clad in purple … very beautiful and graceful creature[s], but indescribably frail” (TM 81). They are compared to people suffering from consumption and Wells’s Time Traveller’s voice “was too harsh and deep for them” (82). Wells’s child-like Eloi are far from Pal’s models of physical perfection. So, why did Pal choose to make his Eloi models of physical perfection?

Near the end of the movie the answer is given: Hollywood required, at the time, a hopeful ending. Pal’s hope is for a future despite the threat of nuclear annihilation and there cannot be hope without the survival of the human race. Additionally, this film is a “product of the Hollywood era in which a romantic interest was considered an absolute necessity for a film to be financially successful” (Hickman 70). So, George, the hero, gains the heart of the beautiful Weena.

The kiss is prevented, however, because the sphinx opens up and George’s time machine is revealed. He springs the Morlocks’ trap by going after his machine and getting stuck in the burning sphinx, battling the Morlocks again, while a newly aroused,
very emotional Weena is pounding on the doors. George eventually escapes in his time machine, back to his own time.

In a scene reminiscent of Wells’s novella, when George relates his tale to his four friends, most dismiss it. David Filby is the only one who wonders about the truth of the tale and returns to George’s house once everyone leaves. George has left once again, but this time has taken three books with him and Filby explains to the housekeeper, Mrs. Watchett, that George must have gone back to Weena to help rebuild civilization. The fate of Wells’s Time Traveller is never known, and there is little evidence to support his return to 802,701 AD (TM 155-6). However, armed with three books, anticipating a romance with Weena, and driven by his desire for a peaceful society, Pal’s George returns to the Eloi as their leader, their hero, and their Prometheus.

Consequently, despite all the deviations that Pal makes from Wells’s novella, what emerges is an adaptation of TM suitable for 1960 that does address the idea of the Cold War ending in nuclear holocaust. Gail Morgan Hickman points out that “there is hope for the future, despite the darkness” (123) of the Cold War theme; while Huntington points out that the “sense of catastrophe, individual, social, racial, cosmic, that so darkens Wells’s end, is entirely missing” (54). Pal’s ending is one of hope for a future for humanity despite the seemingly inevitable apocalyptic war.
Chapter 2

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. (Eisenhower 1961)

The Vietnam War (1964-1975) is considered one of “America’s most serious military and political failure[s]” (Spiechlanin 218), and was one of the most protested and unpopular wars in American history (Rockoff 283). What the Vietnam War managed to do was illustrate a severe flaw within the American economic structure, or what Dwight D. Eisenhower warned against as the military-industrial complex (MIC). Richard Brinkman explains that “the American economy took on a decidedly new orientation toward military production” (181) after World War II. MIC critic Gregory Hooks defines what Eisenhower warned against as “a unified bureaucracy that threatens to grow without restraint and, ultimately, to exert control over all of society” (129).

The MIC is too vast and complicated to fully explore in this thesis, but some of the fears evoked by the MIC during the Vietnam War can be sketched. Americans feared that corporations influenced governmental expenditures, and that the shareholders and corporate interests would be placed above everything else (Ledbetter 18-9). Having been born out of World War II, the MIC had a vested interest in war. This inheritance geared the MIC towards making profits from war, which then gave it incentives to heighten foreign tensions or even start wars to make profits (Higgs 201-2; Zinn 546-7).
The Vietnam War was, for many Americans, a clear example of how corporations perpetuated war for financial gain. Walt Rostow, a high-ranking member of the Johnson administration, explained the Vietnam War as a means of economic growth, not a war of ideology. If America had simply pulled “out of Vietnam and the place was taken over by Hanoi … the Japanese [would] draw certain conclusions” (Whitworth 36). This meant for the American government the possibility of a hostile economic bloc in Asia as Japan might decide to side with China.

The idea that America would end up with “a permanent war economy” (Lens 18) frightened most people. This was the idea that America would become dependent upon war as a means to maintain its economic power via the corporations that profited from war, spending millions on “‘winning’ a war against an existential threat, assuming that winning in such a situation is conceivable” (Higgs 199). Another consequence of the MIC was the fear that the free market would collapse and be replaced by a *quid pro quo* economy that if “left to its own devices … would bankrupt America” (Ledbetter 119). This kind of economy would guarantee lucrative military contracts to specific corporations for their assistance in war. For instance, the C-4 missile contract went to Lockheed, not because it tendered the best offer, but because “Lockheed was encountering financial difficulties at the time and desperately needed the business” (Higgs 218). Unfortunately, corporations like Lockheed thrived on military spending and military research.

Research was another area bought and paid for by the MIC during the 1960s and 1970s. Universities at the time were often subsidized by government and/or corporate grants, but once the Vietnam War began, grants were offered only to those universities
that would aid in the war effort. If a “corporation or University submitted before a Congressional Committee any testimony unfavorable to the Administration … [the] institution would be warned by the Justice Department that any contracts between that institution and the Government would probably be cancelled” (Ledbetter 160-1). In other words, civilian research took a backseat to military research. This then led to the sponsoring corporations owning intellectual property and patents. Consequently, what arose because of the MIC in the 1960s was the counterculture.

Like the MIC, the counterculture is too vast a topic to cover in this thesis, but what can be addressed are the aspects that apply to the second film adaptation of H.G. Wells’s *TM*. Known as second wave feminism, gender equality protests paralleled those of the counterculture and the two became closely associated (Ryan 40). Born in the 1960s, second wave feminism fought against women being “treated like second-class citizens in the boardroom, in education, and in bed” (Thompson 338). American women fought for “the right … to control all aspects of their lives” (Ryan 48) including educational equality, full control of their bodies and reproductive systems, and sexual orientation (Ryan 44-54; Thompson 339-40). Second wave feminism also wanted women to take a more active leadership role in society (Ryan 45-6, 54), and many in the counterculture believed in and supported these ideas.

The 1960s counterculture itself arose to protest the MIC and America’s involvement in Vietnam, as well as a whole host of other social issues. People from all walks of life who believed themselves outside the norms of society, formed this counterculture. Their lives reflected their outsider status: socialist-like communal living, recreational drug use, sexual experimentation, long hair, shaggy beards, and informal
clothing (Lewis 53, 69; Pilisuk and Hayden 66). The counterculture protested through disruptive means such as sit-ins, teach-ins, marches, strikes, and even some violent means like fragging. They particularly protested excessive military spending instead of social spending.

During this time, cinema took an active role on both sides with films such as The Green Berets (1968) and Hearts and Minds (1974) depicting the positive side of Vietnam, and The Strawberry Statement (1970) and 200 Motels (1971) depicting the values of the counterculture. The 1978 adaptation of H.G. Wells’s TM, directed by Henning Schellerup (1928-2000), is a product of the counterculture. There is little known publicly about Schellerup. He was born in Thisted, Denmark, where he spent his childhood. He married Anna Tove Gondy in 1951, before moving to the United States in 1952 (DeseretNews). He began his career in the film industry as an assistant cinematographer on a film entitled Thar She Blows! (1968) and worked his way up to chief cameraman by the time he began directing (IMDb).

As a director, Schellerup helmed multiple B-Pictures and Blaxploitation films. However, he was best known for several religious movies he directed for the production company Sun Classics (IMDb). Under the Animated Classics title, Sun Classics offered Schellerup the opportunity to direct a telefilm adaptation of H.G. Wells’s novella TM, and he took it. Renzi claims that Schellerup’s adaptation is far more a “remake of Pal’s film” (20) than a stand-alone production, but I will show that the telefilm is in constant dialogue with both the source text and Pal’s adaptation.

Linda Hutcheon claims that adaptations, especially successive ones, offer “repetition with variation” (4) and that no matter what the adaptation’s medium is or
when it was produced, this “double nature does not mean, however, that proximity or fidelity to the adapted text should be the criterion of judgment” (6). Her idea, combined with Robert Stam’s notion of an adaptation as a “barometer of the ideological trends circulating during the moment of production” (45), offers us the means to analyze Schellerup’s telefilm. Renzi claims that although Schellerup’s telefilm works well to “entertain a young audience and acquaint it with Wells’s story” (24), because of its limited budget, bad special effects, flat acting, and its lack of depth, “any higher aspirations are difficult to justify” (24). In my view, however, higher aspirations, can be observed when one examines Schellerup’s telefilm closely in relation to both the source text and Pal’s adaptation.

Pal’s adaptation is subtle in making its points, but Schellerup’s much lower budget telefilm is relatively cruder. The telefilm starts in space, following an unmanned Russian satellite in Earth’s orbit until it develops a fault. When it begins its descent towards Earth, NORAD and Washington both contact the Pentagon looking for General Harris (R.G. Armstrong). Harris then is forced to contact the defense contractor Mega Corporation (known simply as Mega, a name bluntly suggesting corporate hypertrophy under the MIC) in order to deal with the malfunctioning satellite.

Informed that the satellite contains uranium that “could reach critical mass upon impact” (0:04:02-0:04:04), the Pentagon hopes the satellite can still be brought down in Alaska. However, Mega learns that it will come down in the center of Los Angeles, California. Reinforcing the audience’s fear that the government has become dependent upon corporations, Washington asks Mega about the new weapon system (X-7B) it is developing that can shoot down satellites. This scene is an extended throwback to Pal’s
adaptation, for it was a nuclear satellite in that film that caused the bifurcation of the human species and ultimately forced Pal’s time traveller to go into the distant future.

Continuing his unsubtle attack on corporate influence, Schellerup illustrates the US Air Force’s reliance on Mega as it lacks the computers to control the X-7B. Harris contacts Mega’s California office and informs Dr. Ralph Branly (Whit Bissell, who appeared in Pal’s adaptation as the dinner guest Walter Kemp) that the Pentagon will be using the experimental X-7B and Mega’s computers to control it. Branly is Schellerup’s Filby, best friend to the not-yet-seen protagonist, time traveller Dr. Neil Perry (John Beck). Harris informs Branly that if the new, experimental defense system works, the Pentagon will reward Mega with a *quid pro quo* partnership.

The X-7B fails at first as the Russian satellite continues to plummet towards Los Angeles. Diverging from both Wells’s novella and Pal’s adaptation, Schellerup’s protagonist appears well after the start of the narrative. It takes a full 9 minutes 12 seconds before Perry appears, and Schellerup delays his entry because his intention right from the beginning is to highlight the intimate relation between the US government and Mega. After Perry enters, Schellerup brings in another element to his theme. Though a scientist, Perry is clearly part of the counterculture: he has long hair, casual clothes, and rides a bicycle. All the other scientists and administrators have trimmed hair, formal attire, lab coats, and drive expensive cars. Additionally, Schellerup establishes Perry’s role as protagonist immediately. Initially X-7B fails, but no scientist or technician can figure out why. Perry orders the room cleared except for a colleague named Ed (actor uncredited) and almost instantly the defense system begins to work. Not only is Perry
now a hero, but he is a leader as well, since everyone (including his superiors) acquiesce to his every order at the moment of crisis.

Deviating from both the source text and Pal’s adaptation, Schellerup moves the base location from the time traveller’s private house to Perry’s lab at Mega. The role of housekeeper Mrs. Watchett is transformed into secretary Agnes (Rosemary DeCamp), and the time traveller is a corporate scientist, just as Dr. Hillyer suggested George be in Pal’s adaptation. It should be noted that, while in Pal’s adaptation the time traveller’s name was H. George Wells (a clear reference to the source author), here the time traveller’s name is Neil Perry. It can be speculated that since Neil Perry is the first man to travel in time, his given name might be a reference to Neil Armstrong (1930-2012), the first man to walk on the moon only nine years prior.

Perry has no girlfriend, eats days-old food, and treats women in the office with respect. Thus, the idea that he is part of the counterculture is reinforced. We also learn that he has been directing his time and energy to a project not part of the laser development assigned to him by Mega:

[Perry] I’m in a hurry, I have to get to the lab.

[Agnes] Ah! Ignoring, once again, that under this rubble lies three months worth of work on the laser project.

[Perry] Three and half months.

[Agnes] Well, isn’t Haverson’s pet project considered top priority?

[Perry] Not by me. (0:13:42-0:13:56)

Via this banter, we learn that Perry is not spiritually part of the MIC. He considers his project more beneficial to the world than a “laser death ray” (0:14:06-0:14:07). He is
more like the professors who staged teach-ins than the scientists who worked on military research.

Heading to Henry Haverson’s office to meet with Branly and Haverson (Parley Baer), Perry again seems the odd man out. His shirt is open at the top, he is in more casual clothing than his two fully suited-up counterparts and he has long hair compared to his colleagues’ short ‘respectable’ hair. Haverson claims that Mega leaves Perry alone to pick his own projects because he brings in funds for the company, but from time to time Mega’s considerations must take priority: the laser project. Haverson notes that only government grants make next year’s projects a reality, just before Branly claims that Chairman Worthington (Andrew Duggan) is concerned for the shareholders. This is a clear reference to the idea that in the MIC, research and ideas must take a backseat to the needs of the shareholders (Ledbetter 18-9).

Haverson and Branly want to know how Perry is using Mega’s money and, as in Wells and in Pal’s adaptation, Perry produces a working model of his time machine. Branly loves the idea, but Haverson is skeptical. Taking the role of Dr. Hillyer in Schellerup’s adaptation, Haverson asks, “What are its practical applications?” (0:19:09-0:19:10), while at the same time praising Perry for making a wonderful discovery. However, because the time machine has no obvious profitable application, Haverson informs Perry his priority now is an antimatter bomb, which Renzi points out is “aptly named for its connotation as a suicidal weapon. Its deployment … implies that humanity has a death wish” (22). Perry comments on the sad state of the world when a government super-weapon is Mega’s priority over a time machine, returning us once more to the initial MIC critique.
Receiving his power module months earlier than he expected, Perry begins his journey into time. As in Wells and Pal, Schellerup’s time traveller comes back to recount his journey in a framed narrative. Worthington is in Haverson’s office, angry at Perry’s deception in diverting twenty million dollars in funds to his time machine project, when Perry arrives disheveled and ready to tell his tale. As in Pal’s adaptation, Schellerup has his time traveller make a few stops in time instead of just one giant leap as in the novella.

Perry’s first jump in time marks two significant deviations from both the source text and Pal’s adaptation. The first deviation is that Perry initially goes back in time and, as in Pal’s adaptation, we watch the effects of time travel from the traveller’s perspective. Instead of objects progressing in time, however, the office is disassembled until it is a green field, and even the sun and moon rotate backwards. The second deviation is that Perry’s machine also moves in space. Neither Wells’s nor Pal’s time machine could move in space, but when Perry stops, he is no longer in California, but in Salem, Massachusetts during the witch trials.

Perry stops on April 10, 1692. He finds himself in a field with a woman running towards him dressed in Puritan clothing, whom he defends from a mob of Puritan men. The Puritans, distrustful of Perry’s clothing and time machine, place him on trial for being a wizard. His calculator and his corporate picture identification, together with his time machine, are described as instruments of the devil, while Perry argues that they are tools for good. He is convicted because the minister turns Perry’s own words on him, making him confess that even if he uses them for good, he is still a wizard.

Pal starts his film in the past, so when his time traveller stops at known historical events to illustrate the growing destructiveness of war, we are more accepting of time
travel because it concerns known historical events. Schellerup, by contrast, begins his telefilm in 1978 California, the contemporary period. Perry jumps into the past first, so Schellerup can explore the origins of what his adaptation is protesting against: the MIC. In Puritan Salem, Eisenhower’s idea of the MIC’s unwarranted influence is illustrated as being there from the near beginning of American culture as the church is participating in the judicial system. This is a parallel to that of an outside source (an armament corporation) influencing the governmental system of the 1970s. In this scene, Schellerup is illustrating the long history of such dangerous influence. Perry is convicted and tied to his machine with the aim of burning him at the stake. He manages to activate his time machine and escape into the future; however, it is to a time that is still in his past.

Perry’s next stop is on June 20, 1871. As he slows his time machine, a mountain arises around him in stop-motion animation. Unfortunately, because the mountain is built incrementally, believability in time travel is damaged because a mountain is not built up like a brick wall. In a voiceover, Perry laments, “not only had I managed to stumble into the middle of the gold rush, but to get myself locked up as well” (0:37:43-0:37:49). The date of 1871 occurs after the California Gold Rush (1848-1855), but despite this discrepancy, the scene serves an important purpose. When Perry claims his innocence, no one listens and they arrest him believing him to be a thief. He escapes the jail with the use of a twentieth-century paperclip to pick the lock. His escape helps create a sense of Perry’s resourcefulness, which will be important later in the film. Unfortunately, a local gang, the Younger Brothers, are robbing the bank, so when Perry escapes, it is on one of their horses.
The purpose of this scene is to illustrate greed in American history. Perry is arrested as a claim jumper and a thief simply because he walks out of a gold mine – there is no other evidence against him. Additionally, his escape coincides with a bank robbery, another illustration of greed. When Perry escapes he heads for his machine. However, despite the mine owners dynamiting the entrance of the mine to keep their gold safe, Perry makes it to his machine. He is forced to dig his way to it, but he manages to gain access and escape back to his own time.

Perry arrives back in Los Angeles on September 16, 1978. He meets up with Ed, who informs him of the rates of “seepage from radioactive waste” (Renzi 21) and how in the coming centuries, its effects will increase geometrically. Ed even informs Perry that “the projection on the advanced laser project is just as frightening. By the year 4000, there is certain to be dangerous ultraviolet radiation produced by the damaged ozone layer” (0:49:34-0:49:43). While Schellerup is briefly commenting on environmental damage, his protagonist Perry is more concerned with the cause. Perry is dismayed when Ed tells him that Haverson does not believe anything so far into the future can be predicted accurately. Ed comments that “if they develop the destructive power the government requests, we may not make it into the twenty-first century” (0:49:51-0:49:55). This is one of the phenomena that the counterculture was fighting against: to make a profit from weapon sales, companies such as Mega would need a perpetual state of war. Thus, Perry has a new mission for his time machine: to verify the predictions and try to stop their cause.

Finally, Perry jumps into the future, and as he time-travels the antimatter bomb is detonated. When he eventually stops, he finds he is light-headed and the computer
informs him that there is little oxygen. He is in a desert wasteland in the year 2025, confirming Ed’s predictions. Perry struggles to breathe as his computer indicates dangerous levels of radiation as well, forcing him to go even further into the future.

In a scene reminiscent of Pal’s adaptation, Perry moves further forward in time and watches the world around him slowly come back to life. Plants push their way through the ground and then suddenly metal doors are built before him. Here is another one of those moments where weak special effects damage believability: the metal doors are built up incrementally like brick walls, which is ridiculous. When Perry stops in front of these metal doors, the world suddenly goes from a recovering desert to a lush paradise. However, unlike Wells and Pal, Schellerup provides no sphinx, just the pair of metal doors. Fully stopped, Perry examines the doors and finds they are the entrance to an underground bunker.

Deviating from Wells and Pal, Schellerup gives no date to the time that Perry now finds himself in. In a voiceover, Perry tells his three companions back at Mega that this future paradise is created and maintained by manmade aqueducts. He comments that he spied other signs of intelligent life, while the audience stares at a stone building in the distance. With no date given, and only the artifacts of mankind’s production left, Schellerup is trying to create the sense of catastrophe that Pal does, but fails. As Pal’s time traveller journey’s through the wilderness, the score provides disturbing tones and his physical actions are filled with distress, but here Perry lacks both the disturbing score and physical distress to make the audience feel he is alone. Instead, Schellerup alters the narrative flow.
In Wells’s novella, the Time Traveller discovers the vents to the underground, the world of the Morlocks, after meeting and befriending the Eloi and Weena in particular \textit{(TM 108)}. In Pal’s adaptation, it is Weena who shows George the vents to the underground. However, Schellerup has Perry discover them himself as he journeys through the wilderness. Unfortunately, this removes any suspense that could have been built up about who the enemy is, especially if we have seen Pal’s film or read the source text. However, Schellerup has a good reason for doing this: the real antagonist in his film is not the Morlocks, but the MIC that Perry works for.

Another deviation from both the source text and Pal’s adaptation is that Schellerup has Perry lose his time machine before he even meets the Eloi. In Wells’s novella, the Time Traveller loses his time machine on the first day he spends with the Eloi \textit{(94-5)}. In Pal’s film likewise: George loses his time machine on that first day. On the surface, Schellerup seems to fall in line with his predecessors because it is the first day on which Perry loses his time machine, but Perry has yet to meet the Eloi. Wells’s Time Traveller meets the Eloi, then loses his machine, as does Pal’s time traveller; however, Perry has yet to meet either Eloi or Morlocks when his machine is stolen. Schellerup has the time machine taken at this point as a means to connect back to the source text.

As in the source text, Perry struggles to open the doors to get his machine back. During this struggle, he spies someone watching him. He pursues the person and is led back through the lush wilderness, cutting his cheek like Wells’s Time Traveller \textit{(94)}. He manages to tackle the person, who turns out to be Weena (Priscilla Barnes) and she is similar to Pal’s Weena: blonde, young, good looking, and physically in shape. Unlike
Pal’s film, Perry does not have to save her; in fact, Schellerup’s Weena is at first frightened of Perry. When Perry confronts Weena, he claims that “you stole my machine” (0:59:24-0:59:26), like Wells’s Time Traveller, who accuses the Eloi at first of stealing his time machine (*TM* 96). However, given Schellerup’s theme, the next deviation from both Wells and Pal’s adaptation is not a surprise.

Schellerup is making a social comment about the dangers of the MIC, so when we are introduced to the Eloi, it is not a surprise that they have weapons. Weena stops Ariel (John Hansen), who is wielding a club, from ambushing Perry and protecting her. Other Eloi now appear, a few of the other males also holding clubs as a clear indication that they have a primitive form of weapons technology. However, Pal is once again referenced here. All the Eloi are exactly like Pal’s models of physical perfection: the men all in shape, fair haired, and young; and the women all resemble Weena. These Eloi are another throwback to the Nazi physical ideal of the Aryan master-race (Bendersky 137), though it is not made clear why Schellerup’s Eloi are like this.

Schellerup’s Eloi are representatives of counterculture values that Perry holds in high regards. The Eloi live in a single commune-like building, and do not use the high-tech stun weapons of the Morlocks (symbols of the weapons the counterculture were protesting). There is a classical spirit to Schellerup’s Eloi as they wear togas and live in peace with their world (except the Morlocks). In these ways, the Eloi reflect the countercultural values that Perry strives to assert, which allows him to align himself with them for hope for the future of the humanity.

When Perry converses with Weena and Ariel, asking how he can get into the doors to get his machine and if they have a leader, the Eloi seem confused by Perry’s
lack of knowledge. However, before they can answer any of his questions, Weena takes the leadership role and examines Perry’s face before leading him off hand-in-hand to a nearby river to clean the wound. The soft tones of the score imply the beginning of a romantic relationship. This is confirmed when Perry, in a voiceover, comments that “besides her incredible beauty, this girl of the future had a simple kind of personal magnetism” (1:01:26-1:01:30). This romance is furthered by Weena’s nurturing attitude. As she cleans Perry’s wound, gently caressing his face, they converse about their two different worlds briefly before she changes the subject and feeds him.

What follows is an Edenic scene as Perry eats the fruit Weena gives him, while gaining knowledge about the Eloi. He is dismayed to learn that they have no concept of cooking or fire. He also learns, again to his dismay, that those around him are the last of the Eloi. Weena then takes him to Schellerup’s version of the Palace of Green Porcelain, whose outer appearance resembles an ancient Roman bathhouse. However, the inside is very different from Pal’s version and more like Wells’s Palace. The first glimpse inside reveals a futuristic looking car and a Gatling gun, drawing us back to Schellerup’s theme. While everything is covered in cobwebs and dust, Perry does note that “someone had gone to a lot of trouble to preserve the weapons of history, perhaps as a tragic reminder that mistakes have a way of repeating themselves” (1:04:12-1:04:20). This is a clear and precise statement about America’s involvements in endless wars. Then Perry becomes discouraged when he finds his own creation. He picks up a card and reads “Death Ray Laser – Developed by Neil Perry – Mega Corporation” (1:04:49). When Weena asks him about what he was thinking, breaking his blank stare, he quickly changes the subject and they head to Schellerup’s version of the talking rings.
Schellerup’s version of the recording device that fills in the backstory is a computer recorder that projects a video on a translucent screen. Though Schellerup’s version of the talking rings does not explain the immediate cause of the bifurcation of the human race, the computer recorder explicitly states Schellerup’s theme as Perry and Weena watch the growing destructiveness of bombs being dropped:

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, scientific advancement had produced a test tube baby and a three-day work week, but it had not solved the problems of radioactive contamination and dwindling natural resources … In the year 2004, a confrontation occurred in the Eastern hemisphere … over the control of a small remaining section of habitable land. What started as a limited war was rapidly spread to a larger confrontation of the world’s powers … The war was destroying what was left of the habitable world and its population … The only safe place was underground. Then came the beginning of the end. The United States decided to use its new antimatter bomb. (1:05:52-1:08:12)

Perry and Weena are disturbed by the final antimatter explosion they watch on the screen and he tells her “that’s why I’ve got to find my machine” (1:08:12-1:08:14). Weena is now not only a love interest for Perry, but a keeper of history as well. She is the one who explains the immediate cause of the bifurcation of the human race. As she walks Perry to the edge of the lush environment, she explains that once her people lived underground, but when the air returned to the surface, so did they. When her people attempted to come back to the surface everything was desert-like. The people were divided over whether they should return to the surface or to remain underground, and so the human species
split: those who stayed below became the Morlocks and those who returned to the surface became the Eloi.

It is important to note a crucial difference between Schellerup and Pal: Schellerup’s Eloi are not as passive or as ignorant as Pal’s. Schellerup’s Eloi have knowledge of their own past and even ways to defend themselves from the Morlocks at night. The dynamic of the Morlock/Eloi relationship has also changed. Weena claims that both species have long been bitter enemies. This idea of enemies temporarily replaces the oppressor/oppressed relationship found in Pal’s adaptation and the predator/prey dynamic in Wells.

It is the night of the new moon and very dark outside. One male Eloi stands guard as Weena strikes up a conversation with Perry. They speak of hope for the future and love in Perry’s world, furthering the intimacy between the two, before he informs her that his future is their past. Then the Morlocks finally attack: they are bald monsters with glowing eyes and green faces, dressed in blue overalls. Renzi’s comment about no higher aspiration is echoed here as he points out that the Morlocks have “wooden, lifeless masks” (24) for faces and have no real vitality to them at all. When they move, they are like stiff statues and no matter the scene, they retain the same lifeless look on their faces. The only frightening thing about the Morlocks is that they attack with stun weapons, which is a major deviation from both the source text and Pal’s adaptation.

Schellerup’s Morlocks represent the descendants of the people who worked for corporations like Mega because their advanced stun weapons represent the weapons being developed by Mega and protested against by the counterculture. This is part of Schellerup’s theme: that humankind will destroy itself by the constant development and
deployment of increasingly destructive super-weapons (like the antimatter bomb). Where Pal is subtle with his symbolism, Schellerup is not: the Morlocks are dressed in blue overalls to explicitly represent the industrial workers who made Mega a possibility. The blue overalls are also a reference back to the Wellsian comment on class (TM 109-10). Wells’s Time Traveller theorizes on “the Morlocks situation in terms of the East End and workers on the underground” (Hopkins 54) and how the growing segregation of Victorian workers split the species in two.

Here Weena offers one of the most startling deviations in Schellerup’s adaptation. As the fight with the Morlocks rages, she grabs Perry’s matches and manages to strike up a fire that scares all the Morlocks away. Weena is the savior that night, not Perry. As seen already, she is educated as the keeper of history, a love interest for the protagonist Perry, and a leader of her people. She is the one who gives commands to Ariel to stop his ambush and to other nameless Eloi to get some food for Perry, but now she is also a hero in her own right. Pal’s Weena is almost entirely a damsel in distress for George to rescue and begin a romance with, and Wells’s Weena is child-like at best; however, Schellerup’s Weena is a multi-layered character who equals Perry in agency. While she does ultimately relinquish command to Perry, she is the implied leader of the Eloi until his arrival. Weena becomes the embodiment of the feminist ideology emerging during this period that was associated with the counterculture. Mega, conversely, is run by men, all but one of the scientists are men, and the only real woman we witness is Perry’s secretary Agnes; moreover, all the Morlocks appear to be male, representative of the patriarchal system.
While Perry “mimics the flat characterizations of a stereotyped hero” (Renzi 23), he does make a relatively good leader because of his resourcefulness. He leads Ariel and a few other male Eloi to rescue those taken. In the process, Perry discovers the truth of the Morlock/Eloi relationship, when he sees the skeletons of the Eloi who have been devoured by the Morlocks. The Morlocks and Eloi are enemies, but the Morlocks are carnivores, like those in the source text. Perry illustrates the proper use of weapons when he convinces the Eloi to attack the Morlocks with plastic explosives (preserved in Schellerup’s Palace of Green Porcelain), seemingly getting the idea to use the explosives right then and there. Before Perry and the male Eloi head into the vents a second time, Weena passionately hugs him and pleads for him to come back to her.

The Eloi plant and detonate the plastic explosives, sealing the vents and the Morlocks underground. Perry manages to seal the bronze doors, setting off Schellerup’s version of the final trap for the Time Traveller (TM 141-3). Perry battles Morlocks in the dark and escapes back to his own time as the plastic explosives destroy the last of the Morlocks. The telefilm cuts back to Perry telling his story to Worthington, Haverson, and Branly. When Perry makes a passionate claim that he now has proof from the future that companies like Mega are destroying their planet, Haverson questions if they can stop it. Chairman Worthington, on the other hand, mentions the potential profit if the machine can retrieve weapons technology from the future. Worthington even claims that “Mega owns everything [Perry] comes up with” (1:33:28-1:33:30), especially since Perry spent twenty million dollars of Mega’s money producing the machine. This is a direct comment on how research is coopted by the MIC and owned by it as well.
The end is a reprise of Pal’s film, with Perry heading back to the future to help rebuild civilization and to be with Weena. While Schellerup parallels Pal by having Perry take a few books when he heads into the future, Schellerup does deviate in the end by actually showing Perry in the future with Weena. Additionally, as in Pal’s ending, Weena and Perry can have a romance that is lacking in Wells’s novella because the Wellsian Eloi were child-like at best (TM 81-2). This deviation, along with the romance, is an attempt to illustrate the counterbalancing elements of humanity against the dark implications of the MIC theme.

Another scene here echoes Pal’s film. The final conversation between Filby and Watchett is mirrored in Schellerup when Branly converses with Agnes:

[Branchy] Neil’s the one who can do it and I hope he does. It’s the only chance of survival for the human race … because he’ll be reshaping mankind. Taking all the knowledge of thousands of years, creating a world based on the good things man has achieved. He’ll be giving civilization the chance for a truly new beginning.

[Agnes] Oh! That’s a tough assignment, even for Neil. (1:36:24-1:36:50).

It is interesting to note that it is not Dr. Perry, Dr. Neil Perry, Neil Perry, or just Perry, but Neil that Agnes refers to. This is another possible reference to Neil Armstrong, who took the first pioneering steps on the moon. Where Pal was ambiguous in the ending of his film because what “Pal would like to make is a sequel” (Hickman 174), Schellerup is deliberate in his ending. He ends on a loving embrace between Weena and Perry in which there is a hope for humanity.
Renzi’s comment that Schellerup’s telefilm “is less an adaptation of Wells’s novel than a remake of Pal’s film” (20) is partly true. Schellerup’s telefilm does owe much to Pal’s adaptation. It is difficult not to see Pal’s influence within Schellerup’s telefilm because the theme of war creates a constant conversation with Pal’s film. However, despite the cheap and, at times, unconvincing special effects, it is obvious that what emerges is an adaptation of *TM* that discusses the “ideological trends circulating during the moment of production” (Stam 45) and that it is a “repetition with variation” (Hutcheon 4). Both Pal and Schellerup deal with the theme of war, Pal more so than Schellerup, but each in a unique way.

Additionally, Schellerup’s telefilm also lacks the “sense of catastrophe, individual, social, racial, cosmic, that so darkens Wells’s end” (Huntington 54), and ends on a hopeful note with Weena and Perry in an embrace. This happy ending is a mirror of Pal’s ending, but more than that as well. Pal never had his time traveller embrace Weena at the end, mainly because Pal desired to make a sequel, but Schellerup has his movie end with the embrace to show explicitly a happy outcome despite the MIC. Thus, Henning Schellerup’s telefilm is an adaptation designed for 1978, discussing how the values of the counterculture need to prevail if humanity is to survive, despite the dark threat of the American military-industrial complex.
Chapter 3

The most alarming of all man’s assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials. This pollution is for the most irrecoverable; the chain of evil it initiates not only in the world that must support life but in living tissues is for the most part irreversible. (Rachel Carson 16)

In the early 1980s, the world awoke to an environmental catastrophe that changed everything: a hole had been detected in the Antarctic Ozone Layer (United States; Victor 15). The high concentrations of greenhouse gases including Carbon Dioxide (CO$_2$), Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), Nitrous Oxide, Methane, and Sulfur Hexafluoride brought about this hole. Since this development, there have been multiple global meetings on how to help the environment. Two of the most notable were the Montreal Protocol (1986), which put controls on deadly CFCs with the intention of these CFC’s “being phased out worldwide” (Victor 14); and the Kyoto Protocol (1997), which was a global attempt to place restrictions on CO$_2$ and other greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the overall emission rates in the coming decades (Bulkeley and Betsill 36-40; Victor 17-8).

Manmade environmental catastrophe is too large a concept to fully explore in this thesis, but some of the issues it confronts can be examined in preparation for an analysis of Simon Wells’s film *The Time Machine* (2002). The Kyoto Protocol was the result of the fear created by ever-rising atmospheric greenhouse gas levels. CO$_2$ and other greenhouse gases trap the sun’s heat within Earth’s atmosphere, warming the surface temperature of the planet with devastating effects. These effects include rising sea levels,
increasing droughts, increasing severe weather, increasing health problems, ozone depletion, “air pollution, acid rain and deforestation” (Bolin xxxi).

While greenhouse gas levels naturally rise and fall, there are two important artificial ways that atmospheric concentrations are boosted: burning fossil fuels and turning land to agricultural use. Burning fossil fuels releases a tremendous amount of CO₂ and only humans burn fossil fuels. However, in “October 1999, the estimated world population passed 6 billion” (Garrard 107) and, as such, providing energy and food became urgent priorities; consequently, economic opportunities arose, and “blighted environments were a necessary cost of rapid, sustained growth” (Thornber 199). The easiest way to provide energy was to burn fossils fuels like coal and natural gas for heat, which raised CO₂ levels and increased acid rain. Transforming oil into gasoline for transportation was as extremely lucrative as it was devastating. Then in the 1970s, “nuclear energy [was the] substitute primarily for coal combustion in electrical generation” (Keepin 43) for many nations, despite the dangers of nuclear contamination from the toxic wastes nuclear fission produced or from catastrophic meltdowns.

As the world population continued to rise, so did the need for food, and its production “in many developing countries … is the main economic activity of the rural population” (Dow 54). Ultimately, “the removal of forests that would otherwise absorb carbon dioxide and their replacement with intensive livestock ranching” (Dow 34) increases both CO₂ and Methane levels in the atmosphere (Bolle 159-69; Victor 8). Consequently, warming of the poles, caused by higher greenhouse gas levels, began to raise sea levels, flooding coastlands and cities, and making the oceans more acidic. Hydroelectric dams provide a clean and renewable resource of energy; however, there
are environmental costs, such as flooding local ecosystems, wetlands, flatlands, woodlands, and even human communities. Severe disruption of an ecosystem can bring about extinction for many species, possibly including humans some day (Dow 60-1; Rust 226-37).

Some ecocritics offer solutions to the problem facing the environment. One of their common basic premises is that a balance with nature should be achieved by producing only “to meet real needs [which] replaces production for the accumulation of wealth” (Garrard 31). These ecocritical solutions include everything from the “fundamental unit [being] the commune” (Clark 96) to preventing all artificial greenhouse gas emissions completely. Many people used these ecocritical solutions to portray worst-case scenarios in many fields. Such scenarios were depicted in movies like *Fern Gully: the Last Rainforest* (1992), *Fire Down Below* (1997), *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004), and *The Time Machine* (2002), the last directed by Simon Wells.

Simon Wells was born in 1961 in Cambridge, England, and is the great-grandson of H.G. Wells (*IMDb*). He attended the Perse School and De Montfort University, where he studied audio and visual arts (*Tribute*). Shortly after his graduation, he found a job at Richard Williams’s Studios animating commercials. His breakthrough project was as Animation Supervisor for *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988) (*IMDb*). A few years later, he would join Steven Spielberg’s Studio Amblimation as a storyboard animator, supervising animator, special effects animator, and, eventually, as Spielberg’s directorial apprentice (*SF-Encyclopedia*). Simon Wells eventually came to direct some animated films: *Fievel Goes West* (1991), *Balto* (1995), and *The Prince of Egypt* (1998) (*IMDb*).
When Amblimation closed in 1997, Simon Wells went on to join DreamWorks, a studio on the rise (IMDb). In 2001, when the opportunity to direct his first live-action film arose (which also happened to be the latest adaptation of his great-grandfather’s novella *Time*), he seized upon the opportunity. Unfortunately, Simon Wells had to pass the director’s chair for the last three weeks of shooting to Gore Verbinski “due to extreme fatigue” (Alcorn) in May 2001. Many critics have hailed Simon Wells’s *The Time Machine* as a visually stunning and “a marvelous achievement” (Renzi 43) in special effects, but many of these same critics considered the movie a flop because of the obvious notable flaws that render the narrative implausible.

Renzi postulates that the central theme of Simon Wells’s adaptation is human progress unchecked (which I equate with human greed within the film because of the consequences that befall the moon) leading to environmental disaster, but he only briefly touches on the ecological theme (33-7). Likewise, Lisa Hopkins postulates that the entire film is about human nature, exactly like the original source text. However, she concludes that Simon Wells’s film offers only “very pat answers” (53) to the questions about labor, class division, race, and others, that his great-grandfather posed. In my view, Renzi and Hopkins are correct to identify these other themes within the film, but fail to recognize the film’s central ecological theme.

Simon Wells begins his narrative in 1899 New York, not London as in the source text and in George Pal’s adaptation. It opens at Columbia University just as students are getting out of class. The camera moves with them as if one of them to a plaque inscribed Dr. Alexander Hartdegen – Applied Mechanics & Engineering. Simon Wells uses this plaque to replace H.G. Wells’s introduction and the discussion that demonstrates the time
traveller’s scientific credentials. When Professor David Philby (Mark Addy) enters, Hartdegen (Guy Pearce) is working on a mathematical equation on his blackboard. Philby interrupts by asking, “Aren’t you forgetting something?” (0:02:16-0:02:17). Hartdegen admits that he is, focusing on his equation, but Philby points out that he is forgetting his date with his girlfriend Emma (Sienna Guillory).

In the first of two immediate major deviations, Simon Wells presents the audience with a protagonist who is a dreamer, an absent-minded but lovable professor that the audience can identify with. He is not a hero, a leader, or a Prometheus figure, as in the prior adaptations, but an academic. The second deviation is Hartdegen’s romantic relationship with Emma, which serves an upcoming important purpose, but creates a major problem: it obscures and postpones the main ecological theme, so that some critics have not even noticed it.

During the shift from classroom to Hartdegen’s laboratory at his home, we learn two things about Hartdegen that influence the narrative: he is an advanced thinker for his time period (implying that he is an advocate for human progress), and his ideas are considered radical (making him an outsider). Hartdegen points out to Philby that, like Philby, everyone is wearing an identical bowler hat, indicating that society desires conformity. Hartdegen, then, is a nonconformist similar to Schellerup’s Neil Perry, who works for Mega Corporation, but is not spiritually part of it.

Mrs. Watchit (Phyllida Law) is introduced when we arrive at Hartdegen’s home, and her role represents another deviation from both the source text and previous adaptations. While a female housekeeper figure appears in both the source text and prior adaptations, she now plays a more active role. She is Hartdegen’s mother-figure in the
story, keeping the absent-minded protagonist from making a complete fool of himself. She also drives Hartdegen into his laboratory to change into clean clothing, introducing us to another aspect of his character and the main social anxiety to be addressed. His workshop is full of blackboards with equations and desks covered in experiments, papers, and drawings. Hartdegen is clearly not living in harmony with his environment because everything is a mess. Staring at a drawing of a multilevel metropolis of the future from the Victorian perspective, Philby asks, “I wonder if we’ll ever go too far?” and Hartdegen’s simply responds, “No such thing” (0:04:53-0:05:03).

This dialogue may be overlooked by the audience because the story almost immediately returns to Emma, postponing the ecological theme introduced here. On his way to meet Emma, Hartdegen absent-mindedly admires an automobile, a brief comment on human progress unchecked, because its presence on the streets is riddled with problems, one of which will ultimately lead to Emma’s death the second time around. However, romance quickly reasserts itself as Hartdegen finds Emma ice-skating in Central Park and is captivated by her beauty. The love between them is evident instantly through their body language. Emma even considers Hartdegen’s distractedness endearing. As they walk through Central Park, he proposes to her, just before both are confronted by a mugger, who kills Emma for her moonstone engagement ring. This fight over the moonstone ring, which ultimately destroys two lives, foreshadows Simon Wells’s central theme, because it will be “greedy overexploitation of its [(the moon’s)] resources” (Hopkins 56) that endangers all life on Earth.

The next scene is another major deviation in Simon Wells’s adaptation from the source text and both prior adaptations. Love for the murdered Emma drives Hartdegen to
build his time machine and four years into the future we see him completing it. Renzi accurately points out that in both prior adaptations, the main themes are “the motive(s) behind the inventor’s building his device in the first place” (35), but in Simon Wells’s adaptation it is not the main theme that drives the creation of the time machine. In Simon Wells’s film, Hartdegen’s love for Emma drives this creation, which postpones the ecological theme. Still, we do witness a man going too far: Hartdegen builds a time machine, a machine that bends the laws of physics, just to save a single person he loves. The reason love for Emma cannot be the central theme is that once Hartdegen travels into the far future that theme is practically forgotten.

In a minor reference to the source text and Pal’s adaptation, Hartdegen tells Philby to return in a week so they can properly talk about what Hartdegen has been doing for four years. Like his prior two film counterparts, Hartdegen does not make one giant leap into the future. He makes smaller leaps into both the past and future. Drawing upon Schellerup, Simon Wells has his time traveller first go into the past to the night Emma was murdered. Hartdegen starts his machine, but unlike the prior two adaptations, his first jump in time is not accompanied by special effects for the audience to experience because this first jump will become merely the motivation for Hartdegen to go into the future. Additionally, this first jump also functions as the model time machine that all time travellers from the source text and both prior adaptations use as a demonstration to prove time travel possible.

On January 18, 1899, Hartdegen shows up early for his date with Emma, intending to draw her away from the danger in Central Park. Romance once again postpones the ecological theme, as Emma is amazed that Hartdegen is early before he
unexpectedly kisses her. Now on Bleecker Street in Greenwich Village, there is a shift that marks a change beginning in Hartdegen, which will suggest what his final role in the movie will be. Hartdegen once told Philby that man cannot go too far, a point illustrated by his own creation: the time machine. However, now when Emma points out that same automobile from the earlier scene, it is “only a machine” (0:21:16-0:21:17), indicating that machines are starting to take a backseat to other things. Unfortunately, Emma disrupts this moment of insight by asking for flowers. When Hartdegen heads into a flower shop, he leaves Emma on the street and that same automobile’s brakes fail. The vehicle collides with a horse and buggy, which tramples Emma to death.

The scene cuts to Philby coming to find Hartdegen talking to himself at the morgue: “Why can’t I change it? I could come back a thousand times … see her die a thousand ways” (0:23:47-0:24:00). An apparent narrative flaw is now presented to the audience: Alexander Hartdegen is supposed to be a genius and yet he fails to see that if he saves Emma, the motivation for building the time machine vanishes. This flaw is, however, fully addressed near the end of the film.

Realizing that he cannot find the answer to why he cannot save Emma where he presently is, Hartdegen jumps into the future. What follows is one of the scenes for which Simon Wells is praised. His animation and special effects skills outdo Pal. With a locket containing Emma’s photograph hanging in front of him, Hartdegen pushes forward in time and we see a mechanical dating device spin. The camera then zooms out and focuses on a spider rapidly building its web. Night and day flash in the sky through the glass roof of Hartdegen’s lab, eventually becoming a single streak from his perspective. The camera pulls away from the glass surrounding the back end of
Hartdegen’s lab to a spectacular computer generated image (CGI) of plants growing over the glass as the seasons change.

As Hartdegen travels through time, the audience experiences his trajectory from both his point of view and a third person perspective to help the audience believe in time travel. Hartdegen’s lab fills with newer and newer automobiles, while in the background, and in homage to Pal, there are three mannequins, who rapidly change clothing with the times. Additionally, Hartdegen comments on Mrs. Watchit has she walks down the street, making a reference back to the novella as the Time Traveller spies his housekeeper going about her job. When Hartdegen turns to Emma’s picture, it falls out of the machine, but he catches it. This, unfortunately, sets up a continuity error. With his hand sticking outside the temporal bubble his machine has created, his fingernails grow longer and the picture disintegrates. Yet, next time we see his hand, it has neither aged nor have his fingernails grown (Petojevic). Now, the camera zooms out again, taking us further and further away from Hartdegen as the city changes and grows around him. Successively more advanced planes and skyscrapers fill the sky as we leave Earth’s atmosphere and go into orbit, where there are many satellites and even a space station, all marking man’s progress (Renzi 33-5). This scene ends with a shuttle landing on a small colony on the far side of the moon. When we return to Hartdegen, we are looking at a large video advertisement for the lunar colony just illustrated.

Hartdegen stops on May 24, 2030 in a metropolis bustling with activity. The advertisement repeats itself, finally fully introducing us to the central ecological theme that Philby briefly mentioned earlier. Quickly, Hartdegen learns that lunar colony engineers are “preparing for the first 20 megaton detonation to create the subterranean
living chambers for Lunar Leisure Living” (0:28:07-0:28:13). ‘Leisure’ is the key word here because these dwellings are only for the wealthy. In this short advertisement, Simon Wells is showing how society, in the last forty years, has transformed a source of death (nuclear bombs) into an everyday tool. He is also foreshadowing events to come by drawing on the past, illustrating that since the 1970s nuclear power has become exceedingly popular despite the environmental costs, which in this case will result in the destruction of the moon (Keepin 43).

Shortly after his arrival in 2030, Hartdegen meets a woman (Myndy Crist), who, despite all the advance technology around her, has just finished a jog outdoors and is now cycling home. This unnamed woman is a quick allusion to the central theme because she seemingly lives in some balance with her environment. As far as we have seen, this individual does not pollute by using advanced technology, but uses her own self-generated power to get from place to place. She is the antithesis of the automobile in 1899.

Eventually, Hartdegen makes his way through an impressive CGI city of glass towers and helicopters to the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue. Here he meets Vox (Orlando Jones), a humanoid embodied holographic system that is the “compendium of all human knowledge” (0:31:13-0:31:17). In the course of their conversation, Hartdegen asks, “Why can’t one change the past?” to which Vox merely replies, “Because one cannot travel into the past” (0:31:44-0:31:52, emphasis spoken). Hartdegen is dismayed to learn that time travel is still considered science fictional as Vox displays a copy of H.G. Wells’s novella and a poster for George Pal’s 1960 film.
Hartdegen’s next stop is August 2037, and, from his perspective, we see the same alley where he first stopped and met the jogger/cyclist, but now filled with fire, debris, and collapsed buildings. Additionally, military personnel, trying to find survivors, arrest Hartdegen because he does not have the proper papers. When Hartdegen asks what is going on, one of the officers simply replies, “the moon” (0:33:58-0:34:01). All the unrestrained human progress depicted within the film has been building to a catastrophic event. Foreshadowed in the mugging scene, Hartdegen now looks up and sees the moon shattered, drawing us back to Simon Wells’s central ecological theme. Human greed (human progress unchecked) has caused “the collapse of the moon [which] is explicitly attributed to greedy overexploitation of its resources” (Hopkins 56), endangering life on Earth. An earthquake hits, cracking the alley in half and forcing Hartdegen to jump into the future. As he is rendered unconscious, Hartdegen jars his machine forward in time.

Echoing both prior adaptations, Simon Wells shows the world around Hartdegen change rapidly and drastically, from a barren wasteland through ice ages to a lightly treed grassland. This depiction of time travel into the future is via changes to the natural world, a reversal of the previous technological shifts that we witnessed (Renzi 34-5). Technological progress led to the destruction of the moon and possibly to all life on Earth. But Simon Wells presents us with a different sort of progress in the second half of the film. The cold from the ice age snaps Hartdegen awake just long enough (before he is rendered unconscious again) to stop his machine on August 27, 802,701 AD, the same year as in the source text and Pal’s adaptation.

Deviating from the source text and both prior adaptations, Simon Wells does not have Hartdegen meet the Eloi shortly after his arrival. In fact, he inverts the rescue of
Weena by the time traveller by having the Eloi rescue and care for an unconscious Hartdegen. As he is cared for by Mara (Samantha Mumba, the Weena figure) and her younger brother Kalen (Omero Mumba), we see that these Eloi can take care of themselves and are by no means mindless. While Hartdegen is recovering, we discover that the Eloi have their own language as well (one more complex than in the source text). Additionally, Mara parallels Schellerup’s Weena, since both care for the time traveller and save his life, marking her as another deviation from both the source text and Pal’s adaptation.

When Hartdegen awakens and pursues a frightened Kalen, we are given a richer glimpse of the Eloi civilization. Their wooden dwellings are built into the side of a cliff face and they have primitive technology, rope ladders, paddle boats, etc. As night falls, Hartdegen gives Kalen his pocket watch, which becomes important later. Kalen’s function in the film is to create a sense of family, which will influence Hartdegen’s ultimate choice in the end as to where he will live. Hartdegen takes a moment to absorb his surroundings, and this brings us back to the main theme. He gazes up at the shattered moon, still in orbit, and remarks, “You were right, Philby … we did go too far” (0:44:39-0:44:43). He and Mara sit and discuss Eloi customs. A score of soft tones and Mara’s desire to find some new flowers to replace the dead ones lying next to her bed clearly indicate a brewing romance. The dead flowers suggest Emma, who kept asking for flowers, which ultimately led to her death the second time around. The new blooms represent what will blossom between Hartdegen and Mara.

As Hartdegen is plagued by a nightmare in which a metal skull tries to devour him, the pocket watch is stolen. Renzi points out that this theft represents a narrative flaw
because the Eloi have built their dwellings “on canyon walls to protect them from the Morlocks” (38), but the Morlocks can climb down without waking them to steal a watch. However, given their cumbersome appearance later, this is highly unlikely. Everyone awakens to Kalen’s screams and Hartdegen hears “Kalen utter the word ‘Morlock?’” (Renzi 37) prompting him to ask about its meaning. Mara avoids answering, saying it is just a child’s dream. The next day, Mara takes Hartdegen to the place of the Stone Language, Simon Wells’s version of the Palace of Green Porcelain. Mara here parallels Schellerup’s Weena again in her function because she is the educator, the one who knows both the Stone Language (English, the language the Eloi forget over time) and the Eloi language. She is the keeper of the history this place represents.

Before Mara and Hartdegen reach the spot where the time machine is, they come across the windmills that the Eloi built in remembrance of those gone. Finally, we see the Eloi culture fully. They have paddle boats, self-powered and wind-powered technology, produce and catch their own food, and live in a commune-like society (Pepper 207-8). They are self-sufficient beings, apparently living in complete harmony with the natural world around them. They take only what they require, representing the ecological solutions ecocritics have suggested. The only non-utilitarian objects we see are the windmills that memorialize those taken. Simon Wells’s Eloi are a society in complete harmony with nature, a reversal of what Hartdegen left in 1899 and experienced in 2030/2037, where man’s domination of his environment led to its destruction.

While Hartdegen inspects his time machine, Mara asks if he will go back to his own time now, but he is unwilling to go. Then she pleads with him to go and to take Kalen with him. Immediately thereafter, the horns blare and the Morlocks attack. This
attack presents another narrative flaw. In the source text, Morlocks can only attack at night. In the two prior adaptations, this is also the case. However, here the Morlocks are attacking during the daylight, which seems to be little deterrent to them.

The Morlocks are ape-like creatures, large and noisy, some with large eyes and ears, and some with large forearms and legs, and all are covered in grey fur. In the ensuing fight, the score emphasizes Hartdegen’s heroic qualities, but the fight scene would suggest that he is more lucky than heroic, making him sympathetic to the audience. He is merely an ordinary person, defending himself and Kalen. After the attack, Toren (Yancey Arias), a male Eloi, explains to Hartdegen that “this is the world” (0:59:57-0:59:58), which only angers Hartdegen because Mara has been taken. Like the previous adaptations, the time traveller is angered by Eloi apathy even when he learns that those who resist the Morlocks are the first to be taken.

Concurrently, this scene also continues the shift in Hartdegen’s character that began with his first jump in time. He is trying to convince Kalen to tell him where the Morlocks have taken Mara, but Kalen is denying him:

Kalen listen to me, listen, sometimes we need to accept what’s happening to us, even if we don’t want to and other times we have to fight, even if we are afraid … We can save her. (1:00:32-1:00:57)

Hartdegen now has accepted Emma’s fate, ending the love that drove him to create the time machine. He knows that he cannot save her, but he still has a chance to save Mara. Kalen eventually agrees and takes him to “the place … where the ghosts are” (1:01:12-1:01:16).
When they enter the place of ghosts, Hartdegen meets Vox again, who serves the function of Pal’s Talking Rings and Schellerup’s Computer. In homage to Pal’s disintegrating books, Hartdegen tries to pull some books off the shelves, but they crumble into dust. Vox then explains that “what was once one race is now two: one above and one below” (1:03:30-1:03:37), but he does not deal with the immediate bifurcation. Vox implies the predator/prey dynamic that is in the source text and both prior adaptations, and that the Eloi are cattle for the Morlocks to feed upon. Vox then claims the Morlocks come from the forest to the east, which leads Hartdegen to Simon Wells’s sphinx.

Glimpsed for only a moment in Hartdegen’s nightmare, we now see the sphinx completely. Simon Wells’s sphinx is a metal skull with hollow eyes and razor sharp teeth. Like the sphinx from the Oedipus stories, this one devours any who wander by and cannot figure out its riddle, namely that it leads directly to the Morlocks, suggested by the nightmare (Hopkins 53). Kalen heads back to the village as Hartdegen climbs down beneath the sphinx to the Morlock realm. Large machines are running everywhere, indicative of the symbolism at play: the Eloi technology is elegant because they are in harmony with their environment, like their windmills being built around trees; while the Morlock technology is rough and dominant because they are not in harmony with their environment, indicated by the machines’ prominent presence in most areas of the Morlock tunnels. These machines, however, derived from the source, create another narrative flaw: the Eloi are self-sufficient, so why do the Morlocks need machines if they produce nothing for the Eloi?
As Hartdegen makes his way through the Morlock realm, the camera tracks through an amazing CGI underworld, populated by many Morlocks working, eating, grooming, and maintaining the machinery. Eventually, Hartdegen confirms Vox’s implication that the Eloi are cattle, when he stumbles into a kitchen-like area and sees the Eloi bones for himself. Shortly thereafter, he is captured and taken to the Über-Morlock.

The Über-Morlock (Jeremy Irons) presents us with both possibilities and problems. The first is the prefix “Über.” As Hopkins points out, since Simon Wells’s “Morlocks have subdivided into different castes, and Irons is a controlling, telepathic representative of the master race” (55), the theme of race is indeed being addressed here. It can be theorized that having been schooled under Spielberg, Simon Wells is foreshadowing the defeat of any people arrogant enough to think themselves the master race (SF-Encyclopedia). When one examines the Eloi in relation to the Über-Morlock, the Über-Morlock does take on the role of a master race representative. Additionally, Simon Wells has taken the idea of an Aryan (or master) race (Bendersky 137) to the extreme, presenting us with the Über-Morlock being a “porcelain-skinned albino with eyes drained of all color” (Renzi 38). The pallor of the Über-Morlock is caused by his subterranean life, reminiscent of the “whitened Lemurs, this new vermin that had replaced the old” (TM 113) of the source text. The Über-Morlock then turns the Eloi also into a representation of any race that was once deemed inferior by any other race. This is reflected in their appearance as well: their dark complexion and dark features are in contrast to those of the Über-Morlock.
The Über-Morlock also functions as a supplement to the Vox. The Über-Morlock explains how the human species bifurcated into the surface Eloi and the underground Morlocks. He even explains Simon Wells’s central theme:

We weren’t always like this. After the moon fell from the sky, the Earth could no longer sustain the species. Some managed to stay above. The rest of us escaped underground. Then centuries later when we tried to reemerge into the sun again, we couldn’t. So we bred ourselves into castes. Some to be our eyes and ears. Some to be our muscles and sinews … bred to be predators, but bred also to be controlled. For you see, my caste concentrated on expanding our cerebral abilities. (1:12:14-1:13:05)

The Über-Morlock explains that the manmade destruction of the moon damaged the Earth as well. We saw a glimpse of that damage in the earthquake that split the alley in two earlier. He also explains how the human race split and became two distinct species. Hartdegen then makes the discovery that the Über-Morlock also controls the Eloi’s thoughts, making them agreeable to the current way of life. Additionally, the Über-Morlock’s account illustrates a logical flaw in the narrative: if they could not enter into sunlight before they bred themselves into castes, how can they enter it now? No prior version of the Morlocks could enter the sunlight.

In the ensuing conversation, we learn that these are not the only Morlocks, and possibly not the only Eloi either, as the Über-Morlock mentions other colonies. We also learn that without the Über-Morlock’s control, the Morlocks “would exhaust the food supply in a matter of months” (1:14:22-1:14:29). Thus we learn what the Morlocks represent outside of the predator/prey dynamic. If the Eloi represent humans living in
balance with their environment, then the Morlocks represent those who do not. If they would run out of food in months, they obviously have no control over themselves. However, since the Morlocks are on top of the food chain, they keep the Eloi in that state of balance with nature by not letting the ‘herd’ get too big (Garrard 107; Keepin 49).

Finally, the Über-Morlock also represents an outside force imposing order and balance upon human nature, taking away freewill. He controls the Eloi and the Morlocks, and, therefore, any environmental and sociological balance is due to him. This does not negate the symbolism within the film, it just makes it problematic and, consequently, critics have struggled over its meaning, especially when the other themes are considered. As the love plot dilutes the central ecological theme, so too does the presence of the Über-Morlock. If the goal is to live in harmony with nature, and the Eloi are doing so with the help of the Über-Morlock, then removing him will endanger the future of both the Eloi and Morlocks, but his continued presence suggests that humans cannot control themselves without an outside influence. This idea of an outside influence becomes important later.

To distract Hartdegen, the Über-Morlock produces an illusion of the past before his eyes, but one where Emma did not die. Instead, the pair married and had children. This scene helps Hartdegen to make his choice when it comes to his ultimate fate, eventually choosing Mara and Kalen (and the other Eloi) over his machine and the past. The Über-Morlock answers Hartdegen’s question about changing the past. He points out that if Hartdegen had saved Emma, he would not have created his time machine to save her in the first place by showing him himself only with the drawing of the machine and not the machine itself. Instead, the area where he built the machine is an indoor garden.
The Überg-Morlock claims that Hartdegen is “the inescapable result of [his own] tragedy” (1:16:57-1:17:01). However, another narrative flaw presents itself here.

Unbeknownst to the audience, the Morlocks have taken Hartdegen’s time machine and brought it below. The Überg-Morlock now presents Hartdegen with it and tells him to go home with his answer. Hartdegen demands his watch back, and when the Überg-Morlock hands it over, Hartdegen pulls the Überg-Morlock onto his machine and pushes it forward in time. Hartdegen reverses the Wellsian trap; instead of the Morlocks setting the final trap for the Time Traveller (TM 141-3), Hartdegen sets the trap for the Überg-Morlock. If the Überg-Morlock can enter people’s minds and control them, how did he not see this attack coming? (Renzi 38) In the struggle, Hartdegen tips his machine and hangs the Überg-Morlock outside the temporal bubble while he is choking Hartdegen. The Überg-Morlock disintegrates in the time stream, leaving only his hands.

Simon Wells here deviates from both previous adaptations, but pays homage to his great-grandfather by including the “Further Vision” episode in his film. In H.G. Wells’s chapter, thirty million years have passed, the sun is cooling, and the world is populated by crab-like creatures (144-8). The year Hartdegen stops in is 635,427,810 AD and ruination is everywhere. The underground lair has eroded to a grey world with multiple metal sphinxes in a wasteland filled with lava and rock. There are people, or what we assume to be people because what they are is not clearly defined, being led like prisoners in chains. There is a moment where the look in Hartdegen’s eye and his facial expression suggests that he has had an epiphany: man can go too far and the degenerated world around him is proof of that. His facial expression is the conclusion of a process that started when he first spied the shattered moon. With the Überg-Morlock dead, the
Morlocks will be out of balance with their environment and destroy everything, resulting in what Hartdegen sees before him. He knows that he must ensure what he sees in this “Further Vision” never comes to pass.

Another deviation from the source text and both prior adaptations is the fact that Simon Wells’s film has no framed narrative and now we know why. When Hartdegen returns to rescue Mara, he turns his time machine into the source of a temporal energy explosion that destroys the Morlock realm and all the Morlocks within it, making a return-to-the-present frame narrative impossible. When Mara comforts Hartdegen about losing his machine, he claims that “it was only a machine” (1:26:44-1:26:46), an echo of what he said to Emma at the beginning, a confirmation of his new role, and an echo of the importance of the machine to H.G. Wells in his novella. Though he once stated that man cannot go too far, Hartdegen now becomes the advocate, the outside influence, of a return to a more natural way of living by sacrificing his prized machine (Renzi 36).

The final scene is an interesting juxtaposition between Hartdegen, Mara, and Kalen in the future, and Philby and Mrs. Watchit in the past. Both parties are situated in the same physical location, just in different time periods. Hartdegen describes his lab to Mara and Kalen just before Philby tells Mrs. Watchit that he thinks Hartdegen’s disappearance is a good thing, hoping that his friend has found happiness. When Philby leaves, he throws his bowler hat to the winds; this is another narrative flaw. Hartdegen does not return to tell his tale and influence his friends and there is no prior indication to suggest a reason for “Philby’s change of heart” (Renzi 37) now, so why does he suddenly adopt Hartdegen’s nonconformist view of life?
A final problem arises concerning the picture of H.G. Wells hanging on the wall of Hartdegen’s lab, seen as Philby exits, and indicating that Hartdegen knew and admired H.G. Wells. Thus, Hartdegen would have read the fictional tale *The Time Machine* (1895) that Vox displayed when first meeting him, but now Hartdegen is living it in the real world. Concurrently, as Renzi and Sandra Petojevic point out, the picture also suggests that Hartdegen knew the term Morlock, so why would he ask Mara what the term means, when he would have clearly read about them in H.G. Wells’s novella? (Renzi 37-8) This issue is never addressed in the film.

Despite the multiple errors riddling the narrative, the film offers spectacular special effects. Additionally, Renzi is correct in his assessment of the deleted alternate opening scene; this scene provides more additional depth to the symbolism of the Eloi and Morlocks, while explaining some of the flaws within the narrative itself (39-42). Renzi also poses a question that he has no answer to: why is this the alternate opening if it would be better suited as the final production opening? However, as an adaptation Simon Wells’s film does not so much fail to address the “ideological trends circulating during the moment of production” (Stam 45) as much as it gets lost in a maze of multiple themes. The love story that drives the protagonist to build his time machine and ultimately head to the future does dilute the ecological theme yet, no matter how diluted, this adaptation does address the possibility of human greed destroying our planet.
Conclusion

One cannot choose but wonder. Will he ever return? (TM 155)

Will there be a director skilled enough to adapt H.G. Wells’s novella *The Time Machine* again effectively? In my introduction, I claimed that each adaptation that I examined within the body of my thesis is relatively effective in its attempt to remediate Wells’s Victorian novella into film. I define an effective adaptation in this context as one with a coherent narrative that can stand alone, yet shows respect to the source text, and, where relevant, to prior effective adaptations.

To effectively adapt *TM*, an adaptor must be respectful of certain elements in the source text, yet the film must contain broad enough popular appeal to be made in the first place. These elements are the use of a vehicle to travel into time, and a coherent reason for the bifurcation of the human race into the Eloi and the Morlocks in the future. Moreover, the protagonist must be allowed to resolve the conflict between the Eloi and the Morlocks. This resolve creates the Hollywood happy ending, usually resulting in the protagonist obtaining his love interest. This type of conclusion is very different from the source text, but conduces to the broad appeal that enables the film to be produced in the first place.

In my view, George Pal’s 1960 film adaptation is the most coherent of the three adaptations examined. The social anxiety Pal is exploring is the idea that the Cold War could end in nuclear holocaust. When Pal’s protagonist George travels into the future, Pal uses convincing time-lapse cinematography and stop-motion animation to simulate the time travel of the source text. George stops at specific moments in history to illustrate how devastating the nuclear conflict could be by showing the ever increasing destructive
progression of war in recent history. Pal uses the bifurcation of the human race into the Eloi and the Morlocks to represent the elements in his own time that could bring about a nuclear holocaust, namely the Eloi as the apathetic American youth and the Morlocks as aggressive Soviet workers. In the end, Pal resolves the Eloi/Morlock conflict with the Morlocks’ destruction, after George energizes the Eloi out of their apathy. Finally, George himself is re-energized by his romance with Weena.

Henning Schellerup’s 1978 adaptation owes much to Pal thematically by addressing the idea of war, but after the Vietnam conflict stirred much political protest in America, he took a very different approach to the theme. Schellerup opens with a blunt attack on the military-industrial complex’s influence within the American government. Schellerup’s time traveller Neil Perry counters this influence by representing the counterculture values that opposed the MIC. The motivation for the time machine’s creation derives from these two elements: Perry, a counterculture hero, wants to help save the world by showing the negative consequences of the MIC’s need for perpetual war to garner profit. The Morlocks, then, represent not Russians, but workers coopted into the MIC; by contrast, the Eloi parallel Perry because they live by countercultural values. Perry’s romance with Weena, and his remaining in the future with her, suggests that countercultural values will prevail. Coherence, for Schellerup, is not a problem; weak visual, special effects and errors in dating are what slightly damage the believability of the narrative. Still, Schellerup’s low-budget, made-for-television film is a coherent stand-alone production that engages with the anxieties of its time.

Conversely, coherence is a great problem for Simon Wells’s 2002 Hollywood blockbuster because it is riddled with narrative flaws and continuity errors. His time
traveller Alexander Hartdegen builds his machine to save the woman he loves, but this motivation is practically forgotten in the second half of the film, where the ecological theme takes precedence. Simon Wells does present the vehicular travel into time through spectacular CGI effects, which creates believability in time travel. However, while not the driving force behind the time machine’s creation, it is the ecological theme that causes the bifurcation of the human race into the surface Eloi and the underground Morlocks. Despite the Über-Morlock’s complication of the symbolism, the duality of the Eloi and Morlocks reflects that ecological theme. Still, the immediate Eloi/Morlock conflict is resolved when Hartdegen destroys the nearby Morlock realm, leaving the environment in the hands of the ecologically conscious Eloi, and Hartdegen in the embrace of a new love: Mara (the Weena figure). Consequently, though it takes some time before the ecological theme emerges, this adaptation of TM does address a major contemporary issue.

Despite the problems and deviations that were illustrated in the chapters above, the three films examined are all effective adaptations of The Time Machine to different degrees. Each adaptation pays respect to the source text and their predecessors, yet each can be viewed as a stand-alone film. But the question remains: “one cannot choose but wonder. Will he ever return?” (TM 155) Future adaptors of The Time Machine should be aware that what conduces to an effective Time Machine adaptation is respect for the classic novella and engagement with a prominent social anxiety during the time of production.
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