

The time machine novel: how should people understand time

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Concept of Time in The Time Machine

Time is one of things that has always interested humanity, and it is one thing that humans crave to control but are unable to do so. People want to control time for various reasons, to change something bad that they have done in the past, or to see what the future will bring them. Some people on the other hand chose to write a novel, where they are able to explore the mysteries of the time. For instance H. G. Wells and his novel *The Time Machine*, which is partly a warning to his contemporaries in the 1890s, but it also poses question to modern readers of the novel and that is what the future holds for humanity, and how should people understand time.

First of all, the novel implies that the time is unstable and relative to multiple factors. The time in *The Time Machine* isn't what humans are used to in general that is described as time on a human scale. The concept of time in the novel is cosmic time. When the Time Traveller jumps into the future, he doesn't watch the lifespan of a person, but the lifespan of a species or even the lifespan of a star. Thinking about time in this way involves looking at the long view even though that long view moves people out of the spotlight.

With this the novel implies that a single person should not view time as something that starts when they are born, and stops when their life ends, but something that is beyond them, something that is more important, and for that reason, the novel serves as a cautionary tale, that is supposed to warn the readers of what might happen in the future of mankind.

Furthermore, the novel explores the meaning of time. The Time Traveller journeys 800, 000 years into the future, so far away that even the nature of

the physical world is changing because of changes in the sun. The author raises a question of whether it is even possible to understand the past or the future, because people tend to assume future and past as something similar to their contemporary time.

Other than showing the future where present day humans have diverged into two different species, neither of which is stronger, smarter, or more moral than contemporary people, the novel also explores a future in which humans do not exist at all. Chapter Eleven finds the Time Traveller on a beach in the distant future in which the only signs of life seem to be giant crustaceans and algae. This shows that the time in the novel is not connected to humans, the universe and the life in general does not stop with the extinction of human race. However the novel also shows the human race going downhill, from the top of the pyramid to its doom.

To summarize, with this novel the author may have intended to make the readers think of their time on earth and what they do with it. Wells gives the readers insight in a universe in which human race is not able to stand up to the test of time and raises question why would mankind allow itself to deteriorate. In general people tend to believe that they have the time to make everything alright, to change whatever is wrong, but this novel presents a universe where mankind failed, and as time progressed it showed how little control humans have over time, and that time does not revolve around humans, and that it is something beyond mankind.