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Speciation and Social Allegory: A Comparative Analysis of the Posthuman Condition in *The Time Machine* and Twentieth- Century Indian Science Fiction

Abstract: *H.G. Wells' The Time Machine (1895) pioneered science fiction by exploring time travel, dystopian societies, and social critique through the lens of posthuman evolution. This foundational work critiques Victorian class structures via the Eloi and Morlocks, projecting a future where humanity diverges starkly. In contrast, Indian science fiction, exemplified by anthologies like Gollancz Book of South Asian Science Fiction (2021) and Homo Minuscula (2023), envisions alternative futures with a focus on reimagining futures, speculation of co-evolution of living beings, and addressing contemporary societal issues by depicting dystopian futures. This comparative study analyzes how both literary traditions speculate on posthuman societies, addressing themes such as time travel, speciesism, and the role of technology in shaping future societies. It illuminates cultural differences in imagining future worlds and provides insights into global socio-political contexts influencing speculative fiction. By bridging these narratives, the research fills gaps in academic discourse, offering a nuanced understanding of how different societies envision posthumanism and respond to contemporary challenges through speculative fiction.*

Keywords: Human, Evolution, India, Posthuman, Utopia, Dystopia, Speculative, Class

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Speciation and Social Allegory: A Comparative Analysis of the Posthuman Condition in *The Time Machine* and Twentieth-Century Indian Science Fiction

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Introduction

Kylas Chunder Dutt's *A Journey of Forty-Eight Hours in the Year 1945 (1835)* is an early Indian SF work that emerged from the socio-political conditions of a colonised society, showing how aspirations and absences shape utopian imaginings. Both Wells and Indian authors engage the future as a space for reconfiguring subjectivity, complicated by postcolonial contexts and human emancipation. As Rosi Braidotti points out in *Critical Posthumanism and Planetary Futures* by Debashish Banerji, "...posthuman research is neo-foundationalist and aims at re-grounding concepts and practices of subjectivity in a world fraught with contradictory socio-economic developments and major internal fractures" (14*). In The Time Machine (1895)*, the Eloi and Morlocks probe humanist exceptionalism while dramatising Victorian anxieties about degeneration and class conflict. Indian narratives similarly use altered embodiments, ecological collapse, and technology to critique anthropocentrism, shaped by uneven access to technoscience, colonial past and caste system. Collectively, these texts demonstrate a dual movement of appropriation and innovation, as Wells' novella is transformed through the Victorian context that gave rise to social hierarchies and cultural imaginaries. While Indian narratives explore humanness, governance and surveillance as analytic lenses to speculate a future that challenges colonial legacies, foregrounds a social, moral, and ecological framework for futuristic societies. This analysis examines how altered embodiments, ecological collapse, time, technology, and social orders operate in relation to Wells's Victorian anxieties and India's postcolonial memory. The study engages the future as a space for examining the reconfiguration of subjectivity and human emancipation.

Literature review

The interplay among indigenous imagination, technological anxiety, and colonial legacies is reflected through the selected Indian narratives from *Gollanz's book of South Asian science fiction (2021)* while the narratives from *Homo Minuscula (2023)* like *The Twenty-Second Century*, *Flexi-Time*, *The Other Side*, *Homo Minuscula*, and *Rasayan* reveal recurring concerns that comprises of utopian longing, social orders, manipulation of time, techno-surveillance, ethics of escaping death, and redefined human forms. In this context, Pramod K. Nayar argues in *Posthumanism (2014)* that Enlightenment humanism is historically entangled with racism and modernist capitalism, a frequently interrogated connection by ISF. *The Twenty-Second Century* critiques Wells' utopia by reworking its distinct templates to reflect India's sociopolitical anxieties shaped by the colonial past. The scholarly

The discourse surrounding Wells' *The Time Machine (1895)* has predominantly focused on its critique of Victorian industrialist capitalism and the degeneration of the human species working as a metaphor for rigid class stratification. Building upon this, the research utilises the framework of Critical Posthumanism by Rosi Braidotti. It views the posthuman not as a singular entity but as a reconfiguring of subjectivity within a world of contradictory socio-economic developments.

Furthermore, a lens of understanding how these narratives project the technology as an integral part of human identity rather than a mere prosthesis is provided by critical works of Debashish Banerji and Maureen McNeil. Through manipulation of time, *Flexi-Time* reimagines utopia, making the subjectivity of time a means of analysis with Wells' novella, while *The Other Side* situates the Eloi–Morlock binary in social status and postcolonial contexts.

Methodology

This comparative study employs a qualitative analysis of the intersections of speciation and social allegory in H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine (1895)* and selected contemporary Indian science fiction (ISF) narratives from the anthologies *The Gollancz Book of South Asian Science Fiction (2021)* and *Homo Minuscula (2023)*. The primary texts were selected based on the evolutionary divergence and social stratification. To bridge the Victorian-era speculative fiction with twenty-first-century postcolonial narratives, this article will utilise a cross-cultural comparative approach. The study identifies recurring tropes by juxtaposing Wells' work with contemporary Indian work, such as temporal displacement, biological divergence and technological mediation. It also analyses how these tropes are repurposed to reflect distinct cultural anxieties. The posthuman condition is studied by drawing on the work of Rosi Braidotti and Pramod K. Nayar by examining how technology and evolution decentre the traditional human subject. The altered embodiments, such as the Morlocks and shrunken scientists in *Homo Minuscula*, are analysed to critique the Enlightenment humanism.

Research problem

The problem arises from the promise of futures that is envisioned while reproducing exclusion, and how absences and aspirations shape utopian imaginings in both Wells and Indian authors. The central concern is how altered embodiments, ecological collapse, technology, colonial past, and the caste system reveal the persistence towards the logic of exclusion. The problem lies in understanding how both Wellsian Victorian anxieties and postcolonial Indian contexts critique anthropocentrism, contest social categories, and reconfigure subjectivity while remaining shaped by industrial-capitalist and postcolonial frameworks.

Anthropocentric Utopian Society

According to *Posthumanism* (2018), the term Anthropocene means "shaped by humankind", and it refers to the powerful impacts that our species has exerted on the physical environment that surrounds and sustains us. (Bess, xiii). The modification of humans was at the centre of any research. The consumption of resources solely to advance humans. The source for such imagination was the philosophical ideas of Enlightenment. As Foucault states in Promod K. Nayar's *Posthumanism (2014)*,

> Michel Foucault traces the emergence of the human, as we know it now, to the set of ideas and concepts that evolved during the European Enlightenment. Toward the end of The Order of Things, Foucault would famously write: 'man is an invention of recent date' (1973:387). (24)

The Enlightenment's emphasis on reason, human progress, and mastery over nature laid the groundwork for modern anthropocentrism, positioning humans as the central concern, which is often at the expense of ecological balance and other lifeforms. Other species become expendable, marginalised by overconsumption, exploitation, and an increasingly hostile environment. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895) critiques anthropocentrism by imagining humans evolving into Eloi and Morlocks. The Eloi, descendants of the privileged, become frail and passive, while the Morlocks, descendants of workers, dominate them, showing exploitation and social division. In this context,

> The posthumanist criticism theory claims that human nature is autonomous and has free will, which is the cause of all imperfections. D. J. Haraway (1991) considers posthuman as not a singular, defined individual, but rather a combination of multiple, heterogeneous entities (*Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* 250).

The elite class living in a climate-controlled dome while the remaining mass of the society lives in harsh conditions, depicted in *The Other Side*, presents a unique friendship between two girls from opposite classes as a symbol of challenge against oppression. The utopia for the upper-class is the dystopia for the others; it highlights the interplay between classes for survival and relational resistance. As a result, dehumanization of the marginalised populations in order to build a utopian future. Emphasising this, Nayar in *Posthumanism* (2014), highlights that Enlightenment humanism is historically entangled with racism and capitalist modernity and points out that,

> The work of postcolonial thinker Franz Fanon and later Critical Race Studies (CSR) theorists like Stuart Hall and Henry Louis Gates, Jr, among others, has pointed to the undeniable link between Enlightenment humanism, racism and capitalist modernity, dating back to the early modern period's great slavery voyages, whereby members of certain races or ethnic groups were denied with citizenship, rights and dignity. (42)

Thus, both Wells' novella and *The Other Side* projects unstable anthropocentric utopias that are premised on the dehumanisation and exclusion of marginalised groups. It reflects through the time traveller's observation of humanity's decayed future, where progress has regressed towards barbarity and in *The Other Side*, the girls' attempt to escape the island and preserve their friendship metaphorically transcends anthropocentric divisions, advocating for a posthumanist rethinking of values, interdependence, dignity across species and classes, and ecological balance. The ISF narrative, *The Twenty-Second Century*, has been related to Wells' utopian narrative, but this is the result of

colonial India, which had witnessed stifling tradition, grinding poverty, and structural exploitation, as well as the stirrings of political awakening (Saint 40). Unlike Wells' depiction of industrial and class-based anxieties, it envisions a rationalistic utopia grounded in collectivist resource circulation, abolishing the inequality arising from the binaries like private and public property in order to ensure health and happiness. Here, the colonial imagination turns utopia into a form of resistance against systemic poverty and oppression. The time traveller in Wells' work journeys thousands of years into the future, whereas in this story, the author wakes up in the 22nd century, but the mode of encounter in the future in both these narratives is strikingly similar. The protagonist in *The Twenty-Second Century* is a professor of Nalanda University who is perceived by the citizens as "an odd-looking alien from another time" (Saint 42). This estrangement is reflected through the cultural and temporal gap between the colonial subject and the envisioned liberal society of the future, just as it was encountered in Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), where the time traveller is alienated from the Eloi and Morlocks' world. Through temporal displacement, these narratives comment on their contemporary societies. Wells critiques Victorian society by speculating a future of dystopian decay due to class distinctions, while the ISF narrative, *The Twenty-Second Century,* condemns colonial oppression by envisioning a future with a just society and a collectivist approach. But the approach differs, as Wells' time traveller initially encounters what seems utopian, only to reveal a dystopian future entrenched due to class distinctions, whereas *The Twenty-Second Century* through its protagonist depicts a utopian society and offers collectivist solutions to contemporary inequalities. Yet, he questions in a cautionary tone whether humans can truly achieve such a radical societal transformation? This skepticism voiced in his rhetorical question: "When was it possible to do what humans do today—to enjoy 20 hours of leisure with only four hours of labor?" (Saint 50). Here, the gap between ideal imagination and historical reality is articulated through the narrator's doubt. Thus, both doubts and aspirations regarding anthropocentric utopia are embodied in these ISF narratives, and they are addressed through controlled environments and resource reorganisation, centering human needs as in traditional utopian visions, yet it resists the totalizing optimism of Enlightenment humanism. By acknowledging human limitations like greed and selfishness, it ultimately suggests that utopia may remain a speculative possibility rather than an attainable reality.

The juxtaposition is crucial here, as Wells' narrative warns that anthropocentric progress, founded on exploitation, ultimately collapses into its opposite, while the ISF narrative advocates collectivist solutions to colonial exploitation yet remains sceptical of whether human nature can sustain such perfection.

Together, these works illuminate the tension in utopian thought between acknowledging human limitations and aspiring toward human liberation. In stories like *Rasayan*, this dialectic is further complicated. The ancient *kayaklapa* treatment imagines a means of escaping death, recalling the belief that "youth never comes twice" (Tamuly 20), while experimenting with the fantasy of reversing ageing.

The attempt to reclaim youth embodies the anthropocentric desire to transcend natural limits, including time and mortality. Yet, the old man, instead of being liberated he suffers from loss by becoming a teenager again and forfeiting everything, symbolising the collapse of utopian hope into dystopian reality.

Just as in Wells's the perils of unchecked social and technological manipulation of Eloi and Morlocks are

revealed, *Rasayan* also points out the possible danger of tampering with the natural life cycle, showing that human perfection and eternal youth is a pursuit that can ironically erase the very meaning of life.

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Fears Interchanged: The Posthuman Condition

A futuristic society where class distinctions have evolved into extreme social and biological divergence is depicted in Wells' novella where The Morlocks, once labourers conditioned to fear the Eloi, have now undergone radical subterranean adaptation that blended nurturer and predator roles. As a result, they provide for the Eloi by day but consume them by night, which consequently reflects the behaviours that blur human and animal boundaries. In contrast, the strict Victorian class hierarchy is critiqued by Wells as the Eloi, accustomed to comfort and ease, become frail, intellectually limited, and dependent, illustrating that privilege rooted in refinement and wealth does not guarantee survival and how social and biological transformations are intertwined outcomes of systemic inequity. The reversal of power and fear raises a fundamental question: if the boundaries between human and animal, powerful and powerless, are shaped by social and environmental conditions, what truly defines humanity?

In contrast to Wells' focus on immediate social hierarchy, *The Other Side* technologically mediates class distinctions through upper-class living in environmental control, which is meticulously engineered that signifies the comfort, authority, and social insulation, while the lower class is confined to the other side, reducing identities to mere manipulable digitised records. Posthumanist themes emerge through the dissolution of human-animal distinctions, inverted hierarchies of fear, and blurred boundaries between human and non-human entities, particularly in relation to human enhancement and biological experimentation. *Rasayan* is a deep meditation on ageing, dying, and identity that draws on scientific research, myths, and Ayurvedic traditions. When an old man undergoes a rejuvenation operation using a hoolock gibbon's glands, instead of advancement, as said by the doctor, "Yes, he aged but in size he appeared like a small ape. There was body hair all over. And they saw there was a tail growing. The young-old human soon became a monkey" (Tamuly 26). This outcome contests established beliefs, showing how scientific and technological progress can blur the boundaries between humans and animals. It reflects larger cultural concerns about ageing, the desire to control life processes, and ethical dilemmas surrounding human augmentation, warning that attempts to escape natural limits can have unexpected consequences. A parallel tension between progress and loss is reflected as narrative *Livability* characterised by advanced medical technologies portrays Maxim undergoing posthuman enhancements that lead to such an extent that the "machinization of humans" became very obvious, as he undergoes infusion of artificial neurons with memory sensitivity through the sweat gland of his scalp. But, as said by Dr., "he would get back all he remembered barring a few vignettes" (Tamuly 70) and as a result Maxim forgets about his golden jubilee anniversary with his wife, and as she quotes it, "That is minor, not needed in this livable world" (Tamuly 71). In *Homo Minuscula*, when scientists shrink to six inches, they confront a world where even seemingly harmless creatures become threats, reversing traditional predator-prey dynamics. The story challenges

anthropocentric assumptions, demonstrating that fear, vulnerability, and power depend on situation and context, not merely size, strength, or cognition. Fear is presented as relational, shaped by social hierarchy, physical capacity, and environment, rather than an inherent species trait. Similarly, in Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), the Eloi's vulnerability reflects the fragility of comfort and privilege, while the Morlocks' predatory behaviour results from generations of labour and subjugation. "The representation shows the effects of stark class division that precipitates something akin to a social revolution, with the lower classes preying on the higher class" (Bashota et al. 252). This ultimately is the result of oppression and struggle as it seeks a remedy for the inequality bewildering them. In *The Other Side*, fear is socially and technologically constructed, emerging through identity regulation, surveillance, and environmental control. While narratives like *Rasayan* and *Livability* show fear arising from memory loss, physical transformation, and ethical dilemmas tied to human enhancement.

Homo Minuscula emphasises that vulnerability and danger are situational, not fixed, challenging anthropocentric assumptions. Across these texts, fear links power, agency, and identity, reflecting social, technological, and ecological structures. Wells' *The Time Machine (1895)* similarly exposes rigid hierarchies of dependence and predation, while posthuman interventions further question identity, corporeality, and moral responsibility. Collectively, these works depict humanity as a relational, contingent construct shaped by context, revealing how fear influences morality, survival, and social order.

An Escape: Posthuman Futures and Utopian Dreams

Although escaping class division is central to utopian and dystopian fiction, its depiction is shaped by authors' socio-historical contexts. In speculative futures, eliminating class rarely means simply erasing social differences; it involves tensions between ideology and material constraints, and between desire and limitation. In Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), the Time Traveller initially encounters the Eloi—innocent, carefree, and seemingly equal—suggesting that Victorian hierarchies have been transcended. Yet this illusion collapses as the Morlocks, predatory and industrial, reveal themselves as the subjugated working class now dominant out of survival necessity, while the Eloi, passive and weak, are the descendants of the leisure class. In contrast, Tamuly's *Homo Minuscula* set in 2115, envisions a future free from scarcity, and was described as, "For the past 50 odd years, mankind has been rattled by a worrying phenomenon" (Tamuly 103). To survive, scientists shrink to six inches, reducing their resource needs and losing connection with the wider world. Yet in their experiment, they discover abundant food, water, and medicine, offering hope to start a new human race, as expressed by the scientist Miss Nirmali Lahon. "Probably we will create a new human race. The race that stood on its two legs with the spine straight, was called homo- erectus; later it came to be called homo sapiens. And we will be homo-minuscula" (Tamuly 114). As explained by Maureen McNeil (2010) regarding the two strands of critical Posthumanism,

> This strand is far more critical of the traditional humanism, and treats
>
> (i) The humans as co-evolving, sharing ecosystems, life processes, genetic material, with

animals and other life-form; and

(ii) Technology not as a mere prosthesis to human identity but as integral to it. (Nayar 19)

This radical rethinking of human embodiment aligns with Tamuly's perspective as by shrinking, they acknowledge natural limits rather than seeking control over them. In contrast, Wells portrays humanity on an inevitable path of decline and extinction. *Homo Minuscula* anticipates critical posthumanism by framing humans as relational, adaptive beings, seeking to transcend anthropocentric arrogance rather than focus on class struggle. For Wells, technology like the time machine is primarily a tool that enables to travel but does not alter the human condition. The reduction of humans to *Homo Minuscula* reshapes what it means to be human, extending beyond mere prosthetics to redefine embodiment itself. Once more, McNeil's posthumanist strand—which holds that technology is "integral" to humans— resonates here (Nayar 19). Tamuly envisions humans as a hybrid species whose survival depends on technology; by reducing resource needs, *Homo Minuscula* could overcome scarcity, the basis of exploitation, though separation from unaltered humans may create new inequalities (Tamuly 114). Wells and Tamuly offer contrasting solutions, one indicating class is inevitable, and utopia collapses into dystopia; the other reshapes bodies, technology, and human-environment relations that allow a new species adapted to ecological limits, moving beyond class alone.

Mode of Speculating the Futuristic Societies

Speculating about future cultures has frequently relied on the technological imagination of time and space travel. For generations, automobiles served as both tools for transportation and symbols of human ambition, opening the door to the potential to transcend physical constraints. In order to convince his readers that traveling into the future was feasible, H. G. Wells presented the concept of a vehicle that could travel through time, the fourth dimension, in his seminal work *The Time Machine* (1895), "There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time." (Wells 10).

Further, he elaborates,

> Really this is what is meant by the Fourth Dimension, though some people who talk about the Fourth Dimension do not know they mean it. It is only another way of looking at Time. There is no difference between time and any of the three dimensions of space except that our consciousness moves along it (Wells 11).

Wells integrated time travel into scientific discourse by presenting time as a fourth dimension, aligning fiction with late Victorian advancements in geometry and physics. This gave *The Time Machine* (1895) philosophical credibility and redefined time as a measurable, traversable dimension. By using the time machine as both a literary and scientific device, Wells examined societal evolution like an experiment. The Time Traveler's study of the Eloi and Morlocks translates Victorian class tensions into a futuristic allegory. Thus, the time machine embodies both the technological optimism and the deep social contradictions of the Industrial Age.

If Wells's originality rests in his development of a time vehicle anchored in scientific discourse, Saint's *Flexi-time* presents another conjecture about temporal manipulation in a futuristic society. The novel's world is ruled by a Union of Nations sharing collective authority, portraying an ideal of cooperative global governance that reduces conflict. Yet, the narrative also exposes persistent socio-political issues beneath its utopian surface. During an alien invasion, India is described as "a state where primordial chaos reigns" (Saint 150), reinforcing old stereotypes, though it ultimately becomes crucial to Earth's survival when an Indian bureaucrat uses a time-lapse bubble. This device, akin to Wells's fourth dimension, allows time to be controlled and navigated for survival rather than serving merely as life's backdrop. The resemblance to Wells is remarkable as Saint envisions a suspended-time bubble as a planetary defence, while Wells imagines a machine to travel through time. In both, time becomes a resource that humans can access and control. What makes *Flexi-time* notable is India's sociopolitical role. Though first portrayed as chaotic, India ultimately provides the life-saving intervention, reflecting late 20th-century ambivalence. India's growing global influence contrasts with lingering colonial stereotypes of chaos and underdevelopment. By giving India the power to use temporal innovation against alien invasion, it reimagines autonomy while also echoing old tropes. India becomes both the site of chaos and humanity's saviour—a paradox mirroring its postcolonial identity. Both Wells and Saint show that speculation about future societies often relies on temporal manipulation.

Wells reveals human evolution and the persistence of class divisions even in distant eras. While in *Flexi-time*, the time-lapse bubble acts as a defence, showing how time can be weaponised against threats. In both, time is an active force shaping human life, identity, and governance rather than a passive dimension. Time is envisioned as a tool for international cooperation and survival, making speculation both evolutionary and political. Wells presents the Eloi as seemingly classless, but exposes hidden exploitation, while *Flexi-time* depicts world peace undermined by stereotypes and alien invasion. In both, manipulating time reveals the fragility of utopia and the contradictions of progress. Wells shows the persistence of Victorian class structures, and *Flexi-time* illustrates how contemporary stereotypes and geopolitical tensions haunt the future. In both, time acts as a continuum where history is repeated, contested, and reshaped rather than separated from the present.

Conclusion

Speculative fiction, whether Victorian Wells or postcolonial Indian writers, serves as a diagnostic tool for historical, cultural, and human anxieties rather than escapism. The future emerges as a contested space shaped by remnants of the present, with speculative narratives dramatising ongoing paradoxes, injustices, and ecological crises while imagining worlds beyond current limitations. This study shows that understanding science fiction's critical potential requires posthumanist and postcolonial perspectives. At the core of Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895) is the promise that humans can transcend temporal limits through a fourth-dimensional machine, reflecting Victorian faith in technology, reason, and evolutionary

progress. As the story unfolds, class distinctions persist and human development declines. Wells' distant future turns social hierarchy into a biological inevitability, maintaining Victorian concerns about industrial capitalism and class exploitation. The time machine serves as an anthropological tool, letting the Time Traveller observe the long-term effects of injustice. By placing class conflict on an evolutionary scale, Wells shows that advancement is futile without addressing systemic inequality. Dominance persists, even in 802,701, and the present is carried forward in future humanity, undermining utopian promises. Technology, here, exposes rather than redeems, revealing hierarchy disguised as progress. Indian science fiction employs similar futurity tropes but reframes them through cultural and political contexts shaped by colonial legacies, postcolonial tensions, and ecological crises. Texts like *The Other Side*, *The Twenty-Second Century*, and *Homo Minuscula* adapt global speculative themes to address caste, community, ecological precarity, and technological inequality, situating futures within histories of empire and stratification, unlike Wells, who critiques late-Victorian industrial capitalism. The utopia in *The Twenty-Second Century* is shaped by colonial experience, envisioning logical planning, collectivism, and redistribution as responses to early twentieth-century India under British rule, contrasting Wells' evolutionary nightmare. Utopia here critiques imperial exploitation and imagines governance reflecting indigenous needs, though scepticism remains, as selfishness, greed, and structural inertia threaten collectivist ideals. Similarly, *The Other Side* reinterprets Wells's Eloi–Morlocks binary within a class and community context, showing how climate-controlled domes and segregated spaces reproduce privilege. Yet, the story also emphasises relational resistance, as two girls bridge technological and social divides, highlighting human connection as a form of defiance. It suggests fragile agency within oppressive systems, contrasting with Wells' deterministic view of evolutionary decline. This reflects how such works reinterpret Western dystopias to critique regional injustices. In *Homo Minuscula*, scientists shrink to six inches to survive resource depletion, imagining a new human species. This emphasises ecological humility—adapting to nature rather than dominating it—as Miss Nirmali Lahon asserts: "Probably we will create a new human race… And we will be homo-minuscula" (Tamuly 114). The story aligns with posthumanist thought, presenting humans as co-evolving with ecosystems and technologies, and framing survival through self-limitation rather than anthropocentric decline. This dual depiction highlights India's late 20th-century global position: rising politically and technologically, yet burdened by colonial clichés. Like Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), Saint's time-lapse bubble treats time as an active resource. Saint offers a fragile hope, while Wells shows decay. In both, utopia is seductive but brittle— Saint exposes enduring prejudices, Wells reveals hidden exploitation—showing speculative futures are always prone to dystopian inversion. While *Rasayan* shows attempts to reverse aging leading to loss rather than liberation, echoing Wells's warning that control over time and nature will breed decay. *Livability* and *The Other Side* show how technology heightens vulnerability rather than eliminating it, making fear central to human experience. In Wells, the Eloi fear the Morlocks, whose subjugated labourers become predators, spreading fear across evolutionary lines. In ISF narratives, fear intertwines with ecological collapse, bodily

hybridisation, and digital erasure, destabilising identity. Rather than disappearing, fear structures futuristic worlds, revealing humanity's precarity. Both traditions, in their way critiques anthropocentrism, class, and technology. Wells focuses on evolution and class, while ISF texts integrate caste, colonial legacies, and ecological limits. Their divergences enrich comparative analysis, expanding science fiction studies beyond a Western-centric lens. These narratives adapt, challenge, and repurpose inherited tropes, embedding them in local histories of oppression and resistance rather than merely replicating Wells. Both depict the future as contested, with shadows in utopia and space for ethical reflection. Wells's time machine, Tamuly's miniaturisation, and Saint's time-lapse bubble illustrate futures rooted in history, exposing present fault lines and guiding justice, responsibility, and humility beyond anthropocentric control.

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