

ang070 S/Ü "Introduction to the Critical and Scholarly Discussion of Literature" Assignment 3: "Analysing Fiction"

This assignment is a mandatory part of your portfolio and needs to be handed in on time. It is ungraded but you will receive feedback. Additionally, a sample solution will be published on the Institutswiki.

Please make sure to submit your assignment stapled together but not bound in any folder. Every assignment must include a cover sheet and the statement on plagiarism. You may write up to three pages of text, according to the formatting specifications of our style sheet. Any text beyond the first three pages will be ignored.

Please analyse the following passage by addressing the tasks below:

Wells, H.G. *The Time Machine: An Invention*. Ed. Stephen Arata. New York and London: Norton, 2009. 38.
("I turned with my heart in my mouth [...] the little monster had disappeared.")

Formal and Media-specific Analysis: Narration, Focalisation, and Characterisation

(1) Narration: Comment on narration in the given passage and support your findings with textual proof.

- Temporal relations: ulterior (possible exception: "My impression ..." → simultaneous)
- Level: Intradiegetic narrator (i.e. Time Traveler), telling the hypodiegetic level
- Function of hypodiegetic level: discuss possible functions, one of them could be: hypodiegesis shows oscillation in the perspective of the observer: between scientific/objective and involved/emotional/subjective
- Participation: Homodiegetic: character in his own story
- Perceptibility:
 - o Temporal: "After an instant pause", etc.
 - o Setting: "well-like openings", etc.
 - o Character: cannot identify (not: "Morlock") but defines character: "Thing", "creature", "human spider", "monster"
 - o Comment: comments on speaking situation, comments on his own potentially compromised observations ("impression [...] imperfect")
 - o No reports of what other characters think or say

- Reliability: questionable reliability
 - o Indications of unreliability: personally involved, limited knowledge on account of unfamiliar setting, first encounter of different species, value scheme ambivalent: on the one hand, superiority of mankind, the 'other' is called "Thing", "creature", "monster"; striving for objective, i.e. scientific descriptions (cf. from outside) but not without value connotation

- o Indications of reliability: esp. as external focalizer: transparency in relation to his own limitations/biases → awareness of hypothesis ("of course, imperfect") → does not sell his impression with a truth-claim
- o Relate questions of reliability to focalization (see above)

(2) Focalisation: Comment on focalisation in the given passage and support your findings with textual proof.

- Time traveller as focalizer employs two different modes; we need to distinguish between the time traveller as narrator-focalizer (external focalization) and character-focalizer (internal focalization)
- at first internal focalization: "I turned [...] ruined masonry."
 - o especially: "and saw"
- shift to external focalization (comments on impression as narrator) from "My impression of it is, of course, imperfect [...]"
 - o especially: "but, as I say", "I cannot even say", "of which I have told you" → commentary upon speaking situation as narrator
 - o "After an instant pause", "But after a time" → temporal summary, narrator
- Shift back to internal focalization:
 - o Especially: "looking down, I saw", "I saw for the first time"
 - o "A sudden thought came to me": resuming the account of experience
 - o "Thing", "creature" as opposed to Morlock: limited knowledge as experiencing self
 - o "human spider": immediate emotional response
 - o "now" → back then, not narrating 'now'

- Time traveller focalizes a first Morlock → not identified as Morlock yet;

- o Both internal and external focalizer focalizes "Thing" from outside: physical description: appearance ("white dull", "eyes"), actions ("running across"), no inside descriptions
- External focalizer, i.e. narrating self focalizes experiencing self; reflects upon his impressions/his reliability

(3) Characterisation: How are the Morlock and the Time Traveller characterised here?

What modes of characterisation are employed? Support your statements with textual proof.

[The following is a list of various character traits, please make sure to connect your observations in a meaningful manner and write up a coherent character sketch. You may also formulate the observations according to clusters of corresponding characteristics.]

- Morlock:
 - o Direct definition:
 - Who defines? → Time Traveler characterizes Morlock
 - In what situation? → Time Traveler characterizes first encounter with the other 'humanoid species' prior to actual definitions of these as Morlocks; partly contextualized through external focalization, i.e. "of course, imperfect"
 - as non-human with some human-like characteristics but increasingly 'degenerate', i.e. less like a human from ape to spider ("a queer little ape-like figure", "so like a human spider")
 - objectification: "it", "this Thing", but at the same time: obscuring and mystifying with undertones of turning it into something evil/vile ("queer", "creature", "little monster")

- o Indirect presentation
 - Actions (commission / omission / contemplated action)
 - Disoriented, hectic, hypersensitive, shy
 - o "head held down", "running across", "blundered against", "staggered aside", "hidden", "went too fast",
 - Animalistic, unclear evolutionary stage, 'degenerate':
 - o either "ran on all fours" or "with its forearms held low",
 - o "regarded me steadfastly as it retreated"
 - alert, defensive but also power-play
 - o "regarded me steadfastly as it retreated"
 - o "clambering down the wall", "disappeared"
 - Characteristics of Speech: -
 - External appearance
 - Non-human: "little ape-like"
 - Underground creature, atavistic, small, no pigmentation, eyes adapted to darkness: "dull white", "strange large greyish-red eyes", "flaxen hair on its head and down its back", "small white moving creature", "large bright eyes"
 - Environment (physical: room, house, street, town; human: family, social connections)
 - Liminal space: between darkness/light, underground/overground
 - o "metal foot- and hand-rests forming a kind of ladder down the shaft", "well-like opening", "profound obscurity"
 - man-made, crafted
 - mutability, downfall of mankind
 - o "ruined masonry", "ruins", "fallen pillar"
 - o Reinforcement by analogy: contrast/correspondence [contrast with Eloi, before and after this passage]
 - o Direct definition:
 - Characterizes himself, questions the routes by which he gains knowledge, reflects his epistemological procedures: possible due to change of focalization: "my impression is, of course, imperfect"
 - refuses to warrant for his observations but presents them to the best of his knowledge (could also be action, could also be characteristic of speech)
 - o Indirect presentation
 - Actions (commission / omission / contemplated action)
 - Ethnographic gaze, attempted objectivity of the scientist-character but also using metaphors, see characteristics of speech ("turned with my heart in my mouth and saw")
 - curious, persistent, scientific drive/motivation ("I followed "could not find at first", "I lit a match")
 - scientific perceptibility, open-mindedness ("a sudden thought came to me"; epiphany)
 - using tools, technologically progressed, 'superior' to Morlock, higher evolutionary stage (also reinforcement/ analogy/ contrast)
 - o "I lit a match"
 - Feels observed: "regarded me steadfastly"
 - In spite of scientific mode, prone to emotional, even physical response to Morlock, disgusted: "made me shudder"

- Characteristics of Speech
 - questioning, hypothesizing ("Could this...?")
 - simile, emotions take over scientific, objective observation/description ("It was so like a human spider!"), see also "light fell out of my hand"
 - scientific descriptive tone in spite of reflections on uncertainty; self-reflexive ("I know", "but as I say", "too fast for me to see distinctly", "cannot even say whether")
- External appearance: -
 - Environment (physical: room, house, street, town; human: family, social connections)
 - See above: encounter in liminal space
 - o Reinforcement by analogy: contrast/correspondence ['superiority' due to use of 'higher' technology, matches, Promethean figure]

Functional Analysis: Toward a Problem-oriented Sample Analysis

Build your functional analysis on the data generated through your formal analysis and suggest a possible problem orientation:

- (4) Identify a research problem on the basis of your formal analysis.
- (5) Suggest one other passage from the novel that corresponds and/or contrasts with the given passage in an aspect relevant to the research problem you have specified.
- (6) Briefly discuss how both passages relate to this problem. Address potential differences in representation and their possible functions.