

Thematic Analysis of H.G. Wells' "The Time Machine"

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Abstract

H.G. Wells' book "The Time Machine" talks about how societies can fall apart and the differences between rich and poor, which were big issues during the Victorian era when people were starting to understand evolution. Degeneration means societies getting worse and social inequality is when some people are rich and others are poor. This research looks at how the side stories in the book, like the dinner parties, show people's reactions to the main character's adventure into a future where things have gone bad. Each person at the party, like the Mayor, the Young Man, and the Editor, has their own reasons for not wanting to believe in time travel. They're afraid because it means accepting a future that's not as good as their own time. By ignoring the evidence of time travel, they're actually pushing themselves toward the bad future they fear. So, the book is a warning about not being open to new ideas.

Keywords

Degeneration, Time Travel, Social Inequality

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1. Introduction

H.G. Wells' "The Time Machine" is a timeless classic that delves into the problems of time and humanity. Through the narrative of an unnamed Time Traveler, Wells explores various themes such as the nature of time, the evolution of society, and the weakness of human life. In this essay, we will analyze these themes and explore how Wells uses his narrative to provoke thought and reflection on the human condition.

2. Exploring themes in H.G Wells' "The Time Machine"

The Time Traveller's story warns about what would happen if society stayed the same. This is shown in how the guests react in the story. They know the Time Traveller didn't like having servants at dinner, which shows he's aware of social differences. Even though he follows social norms, inventing the Time Machine suggests he sees things others don't, making him smarter than them.

The guests are influential in different ways and are important witnesses. The Time Traveller is described as very clever, hinting he knows more than he says. He realizes society needs to change to avoid a bad future, so he risks going back in time to prove it. The guests see Victorian society as perfect because they're rich, so they ignore its problems. If they had acknowledged these problems and been willing to sacrifice some comfort, they could have avoided a bad future.

Wells, "The Time Machine" is a theoretical fiction that transports readers into a distant future where humanity has evolved into two different species, the gentle Eloi and the savage Morlocks. Through the Time Traveller's journey, Wells raises questions about the uncertain passage of time and its effects on society. The concept of time as a fourth dimension

becomes a central figure, a portrayal of the mysterious and difficulties of nature. As the Time Traveller journeys into the future. "If Time is really only a fourth dimension of space, why is it, and why has it always been, regarded as something different? And why cannot we move in Time as we move about in the other dimensions of space?" (The Time Machine 06)

Wells uses the Eloi and Morlocks as allegorical representations of different aspects of humanity. The Eloi, with their childlike innocence and lazy lifestyle, symbolize the upper class, enjoying an ideal world without any difficulty and challenges. On the other hand, the Morlocks, living underground in darkness, represent the working class, relegated to a life of labor and subjection. Through this contrast, Wells critiques the

societal divisions and inequalities prevalent in his own time, drawing parallels to the exploitation of the working class by the elite.

Man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals: that my graceful children of the upper-world were not the sole descendants of our generation, but that this bleached, obscene, nocturnal Thing, which had flashed before me, was also heir to all the ages. (53-54)

"The Time Machine" explores the concept of evolution and the survival of the fittest. The Morlocks, descendants of the industrial proletariat, have adapted to their subterranean environment, becoming efficient and ruthless predators. In contrast, the Eloi, descendants of the leisure class, have grown weak and feeble, lacking the resilience to fend for themselves. Wells suggests that in the absence of struggle and competition, humanity regresses rather than progresses, succumbing to complacency and decline. "the survivors would become as well adapted to the conditions of underground life, and as

happy in their way, as the Upperworld people were to theirs. As it seemed to me, the refined beauty and the etiolated pallor followed naturally enough." (57)

One of the most profound themes in "The Time Machine" is the existential dilemma faced by the Time Traveller as he grapples with the inevitability of mortality. His journey into the future forces him to confront his own mortality and the fleeting nature of human existence. Despite his scientific prowess and technological advancements, the Time Traveller realizes that he is powerless in the face of time's relentless march. This realization leads him to ponder the meaning of life and the legacy he will leave behind, highlighting the fundamental human desire for immortality and transcendence.

I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science and working to a logical conclusion the industrial system of to-day. Its triumph had not been simply a triumph over Nature, but a triumph over Nature and the fellow-man. (57)

Through the character of the Time Traveller, Wells explores the limits of human knowledge and understanding. Despite his intellect and curiosity, the Time Traveller is humbled by the mysteries of the universe, unable to comprehend the true nature of time and space. His journey into the future serves as a metaphor for the quest for knowledge and enlightenment, revealing the inherent limitations of human perception and comprehension.

3. Conclusion

H.G. Wells' "The Time Machine" is a thought-provoking exploration of time, humanity, and the mysteries of the universe. Through its intricate narrative and rich symbolism, Wells challenges readers to contemplate the nature of existence and the fate of civilization. As we accompany the Time Traveller on his journey through time, we are forced to confront our own mortality and the fragility of human civilization. Ultimately, "The Time Machine" reminds us of the importance of cherishing the present moment and striving to create a better future for generations to come.

References

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