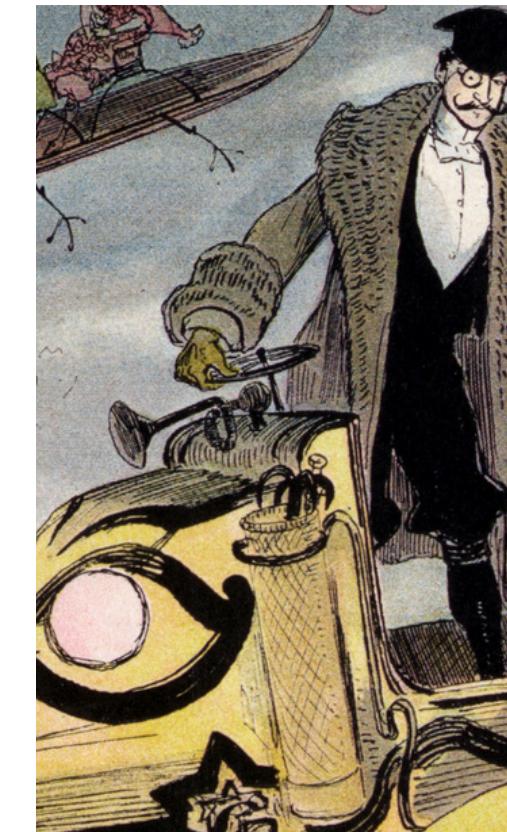


Un-Realism

Everyday Proximities in *The Time Machine*

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The Time Machine

(1895)

"The Time Traveller (for so it will be convenient to speak of him) was expounding a recondite matter to us. His pale grey eyes shone and twinkled, and his usually pale face was flushed and animated. The fire burnt brightly, and the soft radiance of the incandescent lights in the lilies of silver caught the bubbles that flashed and passed in our glasses. Our chairs, being his patents, embraced and caressed us rather than submitted to be sat upon, and there was that luxurious after-dinner atmosphere, when thought runs gracefully free of the trammels of precision. And he put it to us in this way—marking the points with a lean forefinger—as we sat and lazily admired his earnestness over this new paradox (as we thought it) and his fecundity" (7)

Strange Realism

"But if the dominant account of realism is that it normalizes the social world, **the shock of the banal** does precisely the opposite. It makes daily routines seem startlingly out of place—horrifying, funny, artificial, or strange" (9)

— Caroline Levine, "Extraordinary Ordinariness"



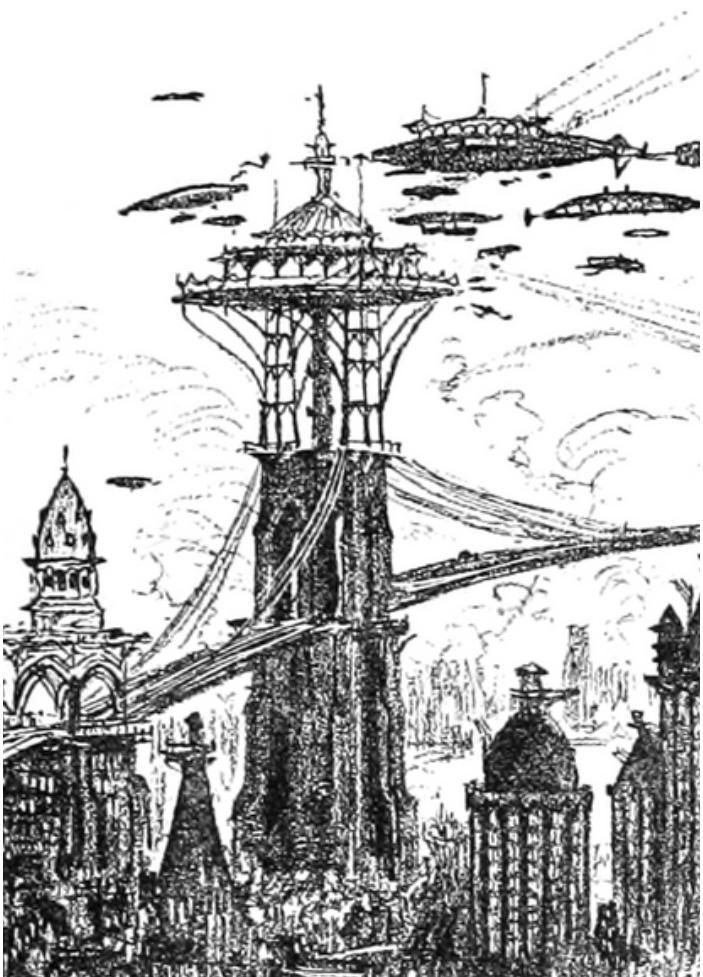
SF & The Frame

"...[frames] do indeed function as thresholds mediating between the reader's familiar world and attendant assumptions about reality, and the events narrated which will challenge those assumptions" (138)

—David Seed, "Framing the Reader in Early Science Fiction"



SF/Realism



"What most people call "realism"—what some critics call "mundane fiction"—is actually a "weak" or low-intensity variety of science fiction, one that requires relatively little energy to accomplish its representational task insofar as its referents (e.g., softballs) are readily susceptible to representation"

"Realism and science fiction, then, exist on a continuum parallel to the above-mentioned continuum where every object of representation has its place—from shoelaces, dimes, and oak leaves to cyberspace, trauma, [and] black holes" (7)

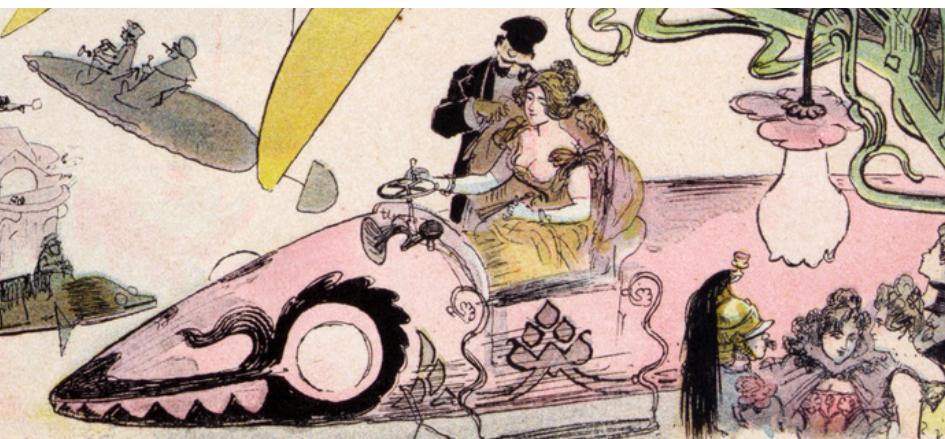
— Seo-Young Chu, Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep?

Room for the Strange?

"the Psychologist himself... sent forth the model Time Machine on its interminable voyage. We all saw the lever turn. I am absolutely certain there was no trickery. There was a breath of wind, and the lamp flame jumped. One of the candles on the mantel was blown out, and the little machine suddenly swung round, became indistinct, was seen as a ghost for a second perhaps, as an eddy of faintly glittering brass and ivory; and it was gone—vanished! Save for the lamp the table was bare" (13)



Breaking the Frame

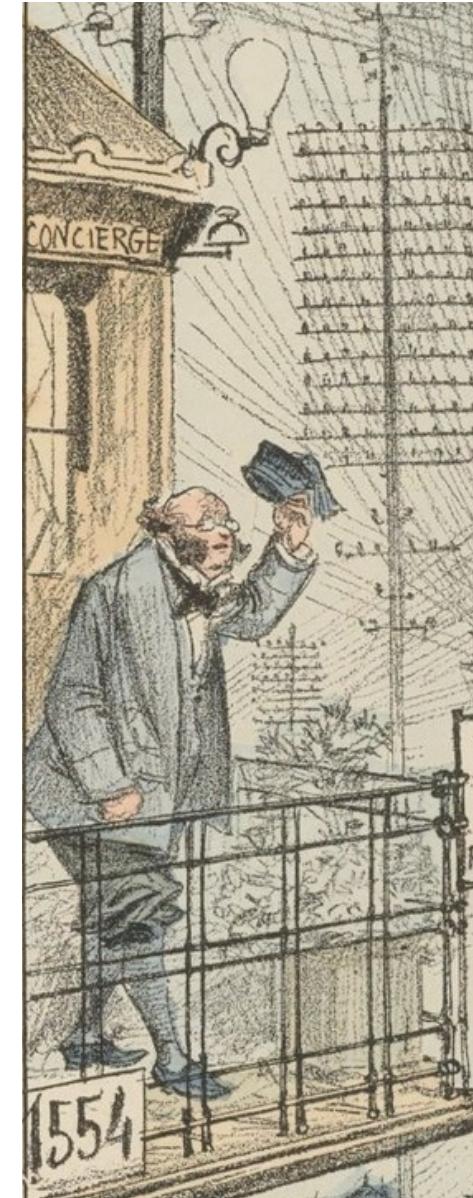


"...a shift of register, of what is at stake in the story, and of the very rules under which the story is being told. It might be argued that it teaches the readers that the basis on which they have understood the...story is as open to criticism as [its] content" (36)

"That shift almost always entails a shift in genre and so in the rules of the fictional universe" (45)

—Graham Sleight, "Breaking the Frame"

Alienation & The "Real"



"The consciousness of alienation... that strange awareness of the strange—liberates us, or begins to liberate us, from alienation; why to look at things from an alien standpoint —externally and from a reasonable distance—is to look at things truly" (20).

—Lefebvre, Critique of Everyday Life

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