

THE 19TH CENTURY LONDON AS REFLECTED IN HARBERT GEORGE WELLS ‘*THE WAR OF THE WORLDS*’: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This paper is entitled “The 19th Century London As Reflected in Harbert George Wells *The War of The Worlds: A Sociological Approach*”. The objectives of the paper are: 1) to describe The Condition of the society in London found in the novel, 2) to describe the real events in 19th century London. The subject in this paper is the novel *The War of the Worlds* by Harbert George Wells. The object in this paper is the 19th century London. This paper can be categorized into library research and applies descriptive qualitative method. The findings are: first, the condition of the society in London, Second is to describe the real events in 19th century London.

Keywords: 19th century, Martians, Destroyd, Sociological Approach, library research

1. INTRODUCTION

This novel tells the story of the Martians’ attack in England. The Martians is a term for the creature in planet Mars. They have a goal to rule the earth. Having sophisticated technology they can take power on earth by getting rid of humans in London, where Mars first landed.

The story in the World War Novel also conveys a critique of the act of invasion. Through this novel, Wells wants to show the social condition in London. Wells strongly disapproved of any action or manner in the English government against the Tasmanians, such as killing almost all indigenous tribes of Australia.

In the 19th century, there was an invasion of the aboriginal tribes carried out by the British government. Invasion results in injustice for the

native population, justifies acts of cruelty, and deprives others of their rights. There are many things we can learn from the invasion, especially the negative effects. For examples, invasion can cause a long trauma for the native people.

From this story, we know and learn from the British invasion of Aboriginal tribes and Martians attack in London. As written by (Wellek&Warren,1977:103) that, *Much of the common approach to the relation of literature and society is the study of works of literature as social document , as assumed pictures of social reality.* The present researcher wants to reveal the 19th century in England as reflected in the novel with an invasion of Aboriginal tribes.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was categorized into the library research. The present researcher took the data from the library. Besides, the present researcher took the data in this research is done by examining or exploring several document, books, and other sources of the data related to the research.

The data of this research is collected by reading several document, and books that related to this research. There are five steps of library research as follow :

1. Reading the novel, the present researcher read the novel to find the data to support the research.
2. Reading the sources relevant to the topic, the present researcher read carefully, repeatedly, and critically the novel to understand the difficult word and read again to understand the content of the novel.
3. Taking notes, present researcher makes some note to help the researcher write the thesis.
4. Searching for other sources, the present researcher takes another source from the internet to get more information to write the research.
5. Selecting data, the present researcher selects the data to know the data appropriate to the research. The researcher analyzes the data.

After the data was collected, the data analyzed used a descriptive qualitative method.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Sociological Approach

There are many research methods that can be used to analyze a literary work, one of them is sociological approach. Sociology as a scientific study has been developed several years ago. In general, sociology is explained as a study of social relations in society.

Accordingly, De Bonald says that literature is an expression of society, that literature given at any time, mirroring the social situation. Literature depicts some aspect of the social reality. The novel being studied is suspected to have the relevant quality, in that it reflects the society at the setting of time presented therein. The writer inevitably expresses his experience and total conception of life (Wellek&Warren,1977:5). Thomas Warton: 103, argued that literature has recording of the times, source book of history civilization. (Wellek&Warren,1977: 102).

2. Types of Society

Gerhard Emmanuel " Gerry " Lenski has classified various types of society into five categories, each of which has their own unique characteristics: hunting and gathering community, pastoral and horticultural society, agricultural / agrarian societies, industrial society, post-industrial society.

(<https://quizlet.com/187795502/lenskis-theory-and-the-5-types-of-societies-flash-cards/>)

3. Theory of Plot

Plot is a literary term used to describe the events of the story in the novel, that should be arranged in such a way that the story becomes coherent, meaningful and interesting. Most critics say that there are five main elements in a plot, Exposition or Introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution (Tennyson,1967:21). By identifying and understanding the plot, the reader is able to understand the message being conveyed by the author, and the explicit or implicit moral value of the story. (Subhan, 2015: 23)

4. Relevant Study

This novel has been researched by several researchers. One of them is Erhans Bonyardo Kristoper Limbong with the title Character Development in the "I" Character of H.G Wells The War of The Worlds in the Sarjana Degree English Department Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada 2014. This research aimed to find thee study of character development of the narrator or "I". An objective approach from Abrams is applied in this research. Library research is used in collecting the data.

Different with Erhans, the thesis written by Achmad Rozaq Nur Utomo, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University Semarang 2015, where he explained and analyzed the defense mechanisms of the ego and their effects on the Narrator's life, the main character in this novel. The theories that under this thesis are the self-defense mechanisms of the ego proposed by Sigmund Freud and the more modern defense mechanisms forms from various modern psychologists. The methods used in this study are library research and internet sources.

4. RESEARCH FINDING

The aims of this paper are : 1) to describe The Condition of the society in London found in the novel, 2) to describe the real events in 19th century London.

A. The condition of the Society in London Found in the Novel

In a literary work, society is an important part. The readers can imagine more clearly the conditions that are told in the novel. In addition, the readers can take good social values or lessons from the social conditions in the story. Similarly, *The War of the Worlds* by Herbert George Wells depicts the social conditions during the invasion of Mars. The idea is in line with the theory proposed by (Wellek&Warren,1977:103) stating that literature may serve as social document.

According to Gerri, society can be classified into several types. The society depicted in *the War of the worlds* can be included as post-industrial, as clued in the description presented by Wells. For example, not explained in detail the work of the narrator as the main character, but the narrator's figure is described as someone who has intelligence, knowledge, and curiosity like a scientist. As shown in the following quotation:

"I was much occupied in learning to ride the bicycle, and busy upon a series of papers discussing the probable developments of moral ideas as civilization progressed" (Wells, 1898:18)

"I might not have heard of the eruption at all had not met Ogilvy, the well-known astronomer, at Ottershaw. He was immensely excited at the news, and in the excess of his feelings invited me up to take a turn with him that night in a scrutiny of the red planet." (Wells, 1898:14)

"I was at home at that hour and writing in my study, ..." (Wells, 1898:20)

"My younger brother was in London when the Martians fell at Woking. He was a medical student working for an imminent examination, ..." (Wells, 1898:121)

In the quotation, we can clearly see that the friend of the narrator works as astronomer, and his brother works as a medical student.

2. Plot

By identifying and understanding the plot the reader is able to understand the message and the value of the story. (Subhan, 2015: 23)

a. The Martians Destroyed Every Parts of London

The Martians destroy all the buildings and innocent people in London. They make people in London worried about the existence of these creatures. Humans are defeated by the Martians barbarically; they are hunted down and killed sadistically using their heat rays.

"By half past eight, when the Deputation was destroyed, they may have been a crowd of three hundred people or more at this place, besides those who had left the road to approach the Martians nearer". (Wells,1898:48).

People in London live uneasily because they are under pressure from these creatures. Mars destroys every object in front of it. The problems in London continue until the alien creates more chaos throughout the city. The Martians try to kill all the people in London. They come with a terrible disaster.

b. There is Unbalanced Power Between the Martians and the People

The Martians have the power, which is the heat ray that comes out of their cylinder that they use to destroy the people on Earth.

"My plan was to return at once to Leatherhead; an so greatly had the strength of the Martians impressed me that I had determined to take my wife to Newhaven, and go with her out of the country forthwith."(Wells,1898:94)

The Martians are strong creatures that have the power to destroy everything on earth. The only way to get away from England is to leave the city as far as possible.

c. The End of the Martians

The end of the Martians is the end of the invasion. The arrival of the Martians is the most unexpected thing for the people of London.

... And scattered about it, some in their overturned war-machines, and a dozen of them stark and silent and laid in a row, were the Martians dead! slain by the putrefactive and disease bacteria against which their system were unprepared, slain as the red weed was being slain, slain, after all man's devices had failed, by the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth.(Wells,1898;280-285)

This is much-awaited end, the death of Martians. When the Narrator is desperate with this chaos, the narrator has been waiting to see the creatures die. The narrator has been waiting to see the creatures die and where it came from The Martians was dead! Slain by the putrefactive and disease bacteria against which their system were unprepared.

B. The Real Events in 19th Century London

London is the location in the novel The War of the Worlds. London is the capital of the largest city in United Kingdom, with the largest population in the European Union based on the [Office for National Statistics](#) data. Based on source [ducksters.com](#), it is known that James Cook was an English explorer and navigator arrived in 1770. It is the beginning of the Aboriginal tribe being eliminated from their land. More than 750,000 Aboriginal people lived in Australia in 1788.

[Indigenoustralia.info](#) and [/lib.ui.ac.id](#) give some information about the British carried out a massacre in 1806. This indigenous Australians, the Aboriginals, were seen as human species that were not supposed to live according to the theory of evolution. Darwin sees native Australians and Negroes as creatures that are the same level as gorillas and say that this nation's will disappear, this was explained in his book The Origin of Species.

Based on [academia.edu](#), Darwin through his theory received support from the ruling class. Since the theory was just heard, Britain was the first to receive the support from the western countries. According to Darwin, the chosen races were the white Europeans, while the Asian and African races must return in the struggle for

survival. Darwin went even further by announcing that these races would soon be defeated in the battle for survival throughout the world, and then perished. The country which benefited greatly from Darwin's racist views was Darwin's birthplace, England. In the years Darwin put forward his theory, Great Britain collected the number one colonialist number in the world.

C. CONCLUSION

The conclusion about this paper there two three points :

First, The Martians as migrants who want to control the land of England where the Martians first landed and the British government massacred aboriginal indigenous tribes to dominate their territories, seeking new sources of wealth in the land of Australia.

Second, the real condition in 19th century, as we know that Aboriginal people feel the discrimination and terrible things in their lives. Losing almost all of their tribes, families, and their rights as human beings. As the Martians did to the people in London, did damage without cause and was unexpected. When Britain carried out acts against indigenous Australians in a vicious manner in the past 50 years, the British government forcibly seized the land from Aboriginal tribes.

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