



A New Historicist Reading of Reverse Colonization in H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*

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Abstract

Literary movements are generally shaped by the historical events preceding and/or occurring during their establishment. Features of an author's society find their way through a literary work and lie between the lines, even when not intended by the author. H. G. Wells' *The War of The Worlds* (1898) is a vivid example of this type. The novel is written during a time when The British Empire has invaded several countries. Thus, the idea of colonization has filled the British people with invasion and its consequences. The difference, however, is highlighted by Wells through depicting a reverse colonization of England by aliens from Mars. The Martins' representation portrays the justifications which imperialists and their proponents used in order to moralize and authenticate their actions.

Keywords: New Historicism, Reverse Colonization, H. G. Wells, The War of the Worlds.

1. Introduction

George Herbert Wells (1866-1946) is a prominent English writer of the early twentieth century. There is an explicit depiction of science in most of the renowned works by him. In such texts he emphasizes on the issues that concern the people in his life time. He makes use of his vivid imagination, rationality and peculiar style. Wells paid attention to the universal, essential, immortal and unanswered questions of life, death, the design of the universe, the destiny of the human race, the core of existence, within the framework of a narrative seemingly about more mundane and less ambitious settings. His works keep conveying the message to the public up today (Roberts 2006, p. 143).

Understanding certain instances in fictional works of a specific period requires knowledge of the historical and cultural elements involved at the time, thus it is imperative to understand the affairs of nineteenth-century Britain, leading to the first World War. The Age of Enlightenment in England brought social and philosophical movements that shaped the mindsets that are adopted in the century after. Britain was widely renowned as "The Empire on which the sun never sets" (Macartney 1773, p.55).

The nineteenth century witnessed a series of new laws, acts and reforms, wars in colonies, canonical literary productions in all genres. By the middle of the century, Britain was the richest and most powerful nation in the world. As the twentieth century began, working-class people enjoyed being recognized and their rights taken into consideration. Therefore, within a short period of time, the world of the British people shifted from ordinary to prosperous, or so they thought. Capitalism rendered the rich richer and the poor poorer; and despite philanthropic attempts, the desolation in slums of cities only amplified. Such misery took the form of moral and physical decay (Steinbach 2017, p. 26).

The term *colony* comes from the Latin word *colonus* which means farmer. This explains why colonialism usually involved the transfer of groups of people from one land to another where



the newcomers are called “settlers” who pay allegiance to their homeland. Until the nineteenth century, this form of colonization had been considered lawful and ethically permissible. Colonialism is commonly defined as “a form of domination—the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/or behavior of other individuals or groups” (Horvath 1972, p. 46).

Colonialism did not happen over a short period of time; it has existed for hundreds of years. Colonization is not one country’s problem; it is a global issue because numerous nations have been colonized for different racial and ethnic excuses. The undeveloped countries and nations were the targets of the colonizers, such as the African continent and the Caribbean islands.

H. G. Wells clearly presents reverse colonization in *The War of the Worlds*. This paper aims at depicting the process and the effect of the colonization on Londoners and the novel falls into the genre of invasion literature. New Historicism is practiced here as an analytical tool to examine the text and its background. According to New Historicists, literary texts are the results of social productions and they are part of historical processes. They represent a moment in history in every moment of composition. In the circulation and exchange between literary and non-literary texts there could be no place for an autonomous art work and the author is as much a product of discursive formation as the text itself.

2. Invasion Literature and Wellsian View

With the presence of imperialism and colonialism, invasion and espionage literature appeared in the late nineteenth century, especially between 1871 and 1914 (World War 1), a period which is historically identified as Victorian and Edwardian. Invasion literature refers to literature that tells a war narrative based on an invasion that might take place in either the form of internal attack, like a reverse colonization or as a military attack from an enemy state. The enemy in this case is not necessarily a human being; it could be an animal, a superpower, an alien, or other creatures. The plot in these stories highlight the confusion, loss, inaptitude, and helplessness of citizens against the foreign, unexpected forces. The first thriller invasion fiction to be published was George Tomkyns Chesney’s *The Battle of Dorking* (1871). The novel was the opener of a new, prolific industry of future-war and invasion-scary genre (Melby 2020, p. 389).

One kind of British invasion fiction would be a scenario of a rapid and sudden invasion of Great Britain. The other possible storyline includes a slow social, cultural, and racial uprising which infiltrates the nation and destabilizes it. It is a softer form of invasion (Frank 2009, p. 86). Invasion fiction which narrates the events of a sudden invasion of England by foreign forces, usually had its aggressor as German, French, or Russian powers. The rapid expansion of the empire created political circumstances of fear of an inverted invasion of British land—that the British citizens would be exposed to the heinousness colonization which has caused to others (Matin 1997, p. 254). This reverse-colonialism scenario, according to Stephen Arata, emerged as the result of the heightening “fragility of the British imperial dominion” and a response to British “cultural guilt” (cited in Frank 2009, p. 87).

The significance of this point here is that the British, for some reasons, and most probably their awareness of imperial and colonial perils, felt unsafe and threatened. These uncertainties, from an anthropological standpoint, should ignite a survival-mode mindset of defense. However, were British citizens ready to fight off an invader? The answer, from a Wellsian perspective, was a no. As Melby puts it, the overseas dominance of the British became a source of insecurity and weakness: “In 1901, as Wells was looking towards the future, Britain had yet to emerge victorious from the conflict against the Boer republics in South Africa. The British empire itself seemed ... to be creaking at the seams, unable to conquer new lands, let alone hold on to what had already been won” (2020, p. 402).

In his discussion of Wells’ imperial implications, Aaron Worth contends that Wells allots a space in his work for technological and scientific aspects within imperial contexts,



particularly means of communication (2010, p. 66). Wells also links history and culture to his contemporary days. A social critic, he was concerned with British cultural survival. Literature was a form of communication media in which Wells expressed his thoughts on the empire and imperial system and conveyed his vision of the future (ibid, p. 69). The future, in his rather pessimistic works, was bleak, uncertain and dark.

As long as the British Empire was “protecting” the small nations, the extraction of resources formed minimal compensation. The consequent effect of imperialism, as evident throughout history, is rebellion and call for independence. Uprisings, mutinies, and rebellions ensued in India in the 1850s, and they were followed by wars in New Zealand and Jamaica in the 1960s. As a result, the British public and government viewed the colonized natives as barbaric, uncivilized, and ungrateful creatures. Being superior, the British had the right to govern them “with a firm hand” and exert control over their lives and futures (Steinback 2017, pp. 76-9) J. A. Hobson criticized imperialism for its cruel economics, its export of capital, its alliance with heartless forces, and its facade of well-meaning “civilizing” justifications (1902, p.189). Referring to a selection of H. G. Wells’ nonfiction works, Dilloway argues that Wells contributed to knowledge, research, intellect, and collective life. Wells identified the valid limits of human perception of reality and natural phenomenon and evaluated existing ideal “utopian” societies. Dilloway continues that Wells’ works reviewed human relationships, ways of thinking, and behavior from a scientific perspective-which in itself carries an avant-garde view of “citizen of the world” education present in modern day (2000, pp. 9-11).

Dilloway believes that Wells tried to create “radical change without revolution” but has failed because of the triumph of power over reason. However, he has hoped that Wellsian thought can still achieve its quest in science, social philosophy, secular humanism, and economic ideology. His failure does not necessarily mean his misunderstanding of how things might turn, but it clearly shows his confidential ideology which is rooted in socialism. Examining imperialist and colonialist movements from a Wellsian perspective brings forth the issue of disillusionment. Invading territories under the pretext of Christian missionaries, spreading education, and establishing modern civilization did not convince all thinkers and literary figures of the nineteenth century. Financial gain and expanding profits were the main benefits from imperialism and colonization for the British Empire. These implications are present in the literary works of Wells and other writers (2000, pp. 9-11).

3. Reverse Colonialisation in *The War of the Worlds*

Officially published in January 1898, *The War of the Worlds* succeeded his novels *The Time Machine: An Invention* (1895), *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), and *The Invisible Man* (1897). Wells had already developed a reputation and been established as a writer of “scientific romance” as the term science fiction had not been coined yet (Danahay 2003, p. 9). The critical responses to the novel focused on themes related to war and weaponry, biology, evolution and futuristic science fiction. Wells had been living in Woking until 1896 when he started writing the novel, and this allowed him to give realistic description of the town and its surroundings. The novel was an immediate success, and this led to forming friendships with other writers such as Henry James, George Gissing, Joseph Conrad, Stephen Crane and Bernard Shaw (Danahay 2003, p. 17).

Narrated in the first-person, the novel relays the details of an unnamed man’s adventure from the day flashes of light are seen on Mars until he miraculously survives the Martian invasion. The novel is divided into Book 1 and 2. At the onset of the story in Book 1, readers could tell two things about the narrator: he is greatly interested in science, and he has a strong relationship with his wife. In fact, his whole quest is to safely reunite with his wife. Originally thought to be falling stars or meteors, seven Martian cylinders land on Earth— or around London to be particular (as there might have been others), over the period of four weeks.



Wells' story fit in with prevailing invasion narratives which were becoming popular in the final decades of the century. What Wells did differently was creating Martians as invaders instead of German or French forces (ibid, p. 22). His work is close to that of previous works in that he uses local English places and has London threatened. However, Wells' novel is directed towards humanity as a whole, the Martians have military technology completely unknown to the Victorians. In 1877, Mars made one of its closest approaches to Earth, and its features were visible by the new reflector telescopes and hence closely examined for the first time. Astronomers like the Italian Schiaparelli and the American Lowell were fascinated by Mars and the canals observed on its surface. They were both convinced Mars exhibited forms of intelligent life and advanced civilization (ibid, p. 24).

The War of the Worlds has influenced readers beyond the Victorian context, highlighting peoples' fears of invasion, wars, powerful military technologies, and superior intelligences. The novel has been adapted into radio, theatrical, and cinematic performances. Whatever Wells critiqued about the Victorian society is valid to contemporary societies and leaders today. As Martin Danahay puts it in his introduction to the novel: "*The War of the Worlds* will undoubtedly continue to exert its influence over science fiction and perceptions of extraterrestrial life well into the future. H.G. Wells continues to be 'The Man Who Invented Tomorrow'" (2003, p.29).

H. G. Wells reveals, in a 1920 interview, that the novel was inspired by a conversation he had had with his brother Frank, to whom the novel is dedicated. In the conversation, Wells contemplated the consequences of having beings from another planet fall on Earth, referring to the "very frightful disaster" that befell the Tasmanian natives upon being discovered by the Europeans (Danahay 2003, p. 193). The novel, according to Patrick Parrinder, depicts the Martian invasion of England as "colonisation in reverse" where what the Martians do is similar to what Europeans had done to the Tasmanian natives (1995, p.75). In the opening of Book 1, Wells points out that the Tasmanians were "entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years" (2019, p. 15).

In the aforementioned interview, Wells continues to say that tragedy "had gone out of human life forever" so he was trying to point out that nothing was impossible, and things like flying, great guns, poisonous gasses, and so on could disturb the comfort their current life in case world peace is not established. Wells' words show that he was concerned about welfare of humans and the stability which peace from armed conflicts establishes in their lives. The images of atrocities practiced by colonizers and the extermination of natives reflect Wells' own "pessimistic views on the longevity of humanity and its works" (Danahay 2003, p. 234).

Colonial and imperial impressions are evidently present across the novel. From the beginning, by referring to the extermination of Tasmanians, H. G. Wells brings colonialism to the table. The extended metaphor highlights the effects of imperialism and colonialism, particularly military invasions, on both the dominant party and the overpowered one. In *The War of the Worlds*, social, mental, ethical, and existential implications can be extracted from the imperialist aspect of the narrative. Despite the fact that the novel does not mention Britain as a colonial power (and mentions "European immigrants" when referring to Tasmanians), the British Empire is present in the form of Martians. Thus, England faces its own possible imperial future (Worth 2010, p. 71).

The Martians are the central characters in the novel; hence they need to be introduced. The actual nature of the Martians gradually unfolds as the narrator experiences close views of them first hand. Wells allows the curious reader to speculate along with the narrator, creating a form of suspense for such a thrilling novel. It is only in Book 2 that the narrator reveals later discoveries about the Martians regarding their physiology. Interestingly, the narrator criticizes pamphlets which are later published about the Martians and in which they are poorly and inaccurately described. Hence, his narrative aims to clarify the truth about these extra-terrestrial beings.



The first encounter with the Martians happens when the narrator goes to the Commons and sees the first cylinder in the pit which its fall created. There are two aspects to the presence of the Martians: the moving and acting machinery and their real physical bodies. Upon the initial glimpse, the narrator depicts the alien's body as grayish, round, and bulky, its skin glistening like oily brown wet leather. Its browless head has two large dark-colored eyes which look like luminous disks— "vital, intense, inhuman, crippled and monstrous" (Wells 2019, p. 28). One tight ear drum is situated behind the head. The noseless face has a drooling V-shaped and incessantly quivering mouth, which is lipless with a pointed upper part and wedge-like, chinless lower part. Thick, lanky gray tentacles wriggle from its middle part. His first impression is that they are disgusting, dreadful, and nasty. In addition, there is reference to the "Gorgon" creatures of Greek mythology (Medusa and her two sisters, whose hair is made of living, grotesque snakes) when he describes the mouth as having "Gorgon groups of tentacles" (Wells 2019, p. 28). These tentacles are described again as a group of "sixteen slender, almost whiplike tentacles, arranged in two bunches of eight each" (Wells 2019, p. 133). After dissecting these entities, the tentacles are called "hands" by an anatomist, Professor Howes, and the hands are useless due to the increase weight on Earth. Hence, the Martians have no middle nor legs.

The Martians do not wear clothes, unaffected by weather and pressure. To the narrator, they have advanced beyond humans' needs for clothing and ornaments. They are "mere brains" (Wells 2019, p. 137) that change bodies based on their needs. They are sleepless, tireless, sexless, and emotionless. The Martians feed by directly injecting fresh blood of other creatures into their veins via "a little pipette" (Wells 2019, p. 134). They neither eat nor digest as they do not have a body. The narrator, from the peephole, witnesses the fighting-machine removing a man from the cage on its back. The middle-aged man's shrieks as his blood is being sucked terrorize the narrator and the curate. Skeletons of dead bodies are discovered after the narrator leaves the house.

The Martian fighting-machines display a very organized manner of work, and the narrator relates how hardworking they are. The Heat-Ray is portrayed as the primary destructive weapon of the Martians. It is first used after a release of three puffs of bright greenish flame along with a flash of light that darkens the sky and a faint hissing sound "as if each man were suddenly and momentarily turned to fire" (Wells 2019, p. 33). The noiseless flame not only burns humans but sets trees, hedges, and wooden buildings into fire. Wells describes the Heat-Ray as an "invisible, inevitable sword of heat" (Wells 2019, p. 33).

The reason behind the Martians' extermination is explained due to the absence of microorganisms, which cause hundreds of diseases and illnesses to humans, on Mars. Martians have not developed the powerful resisting immunity which humans have built over the years. So, they are slain "after all man's devices had failed, by the humblest things (germs) that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth" (Wells 2019, p. 177).

Victorian readers are familiar with the names of the streets, buildings, public areas and other places mentioned. This exact naming of individuals and places adds to the probability of the invasion, amplifying the terrors of an invasion to the reader. In addition to that, the invasion process is highly systematic and organized. The readers note a pattern in which events unfold. First, the cylinder drops, causing an enormous pit. Green puffs of smoke are seen and the rattle of working machinery is heard. Following that, the fighting-machines emerge and start destroying everything in their wake. This is repeated over different areas until a vast area of land is set up with stations, vegetation (red weed), and construction sites. This process could be compared to that of establishing settlements in colonized lands. Explorers arrive first, followed by settlers that gather resources and erect lodgings, then military forces who protect the newcomers and subdue the natives.

The initial reaction to the invasion is recounted from the lens of the narrator and citizens of Woking. Their curiosity overshadows their sense of alarm. In the beginning, the astronomer



Ogilvy presumes that there is a man who needs to be rescued in the cylinder. Even though he links the fallen object to the flashes on Mars, he is not scared. This lack of fear from the invader raises the issue of the British confidence in themselves as great powers who can overcome all types of threats. In one unsigned review, published in 1898, a critic contends that the idea of having a superior, progressive race on Mars invaded Earth is “repugnant” (Danahay 2003, p. 228). Later, Ogilvy acknowledges his ignorance about what the “confounded thing” is, prompting people to stay back (Wells 2019, p. 27). The narrator, upon seeing the Martian’s body for the first time, feels petrified, seized by astonishment and terror. The physicality of the Martian is animalistic and horrifying.

The second phase of absorbing the invasion is denial. After Ogilvy and his companions are wiped out, the narrator walks back home and realizes that people who have not witnessed what happened about the common carried on with normal lives. A group of three people actually laugh at his jumbled state when he tries to explain what the creatures of Mars have done and fails. The news slowly spreads, but people do not believe it until they see it. The narrator remarks, “The fever of war that would presently clog vein and artery, deaden nerve and destroy brain, had still to develop” (Wells 2019, p. 45). In an early conversation with his neighbor, the narrator reveals the former’s naive conviction that the British troops would be able to capture a Martian soon. The man says, “It’s a pity they make themselves so unapproachable ... It would be curious to know how they live on another planet; we might learn a thing or two” (Wells 2019, p. 47). Again, this shows how the English not only had blind faith and confidence in their army but also greedily thought in terms of scientific experimentation and discovery. The ever-present sense of superiority is what Wells aimed to diminish.

It takes the Martians a few days before they reach London; therefore, until then, Londoners thought the creatures were sluggish and unthreatening. They thought that the English outnumbered the aliens, so there was nothing to worry about. Their extremely cool attitude is approached in a sarcastic tone by the narrator. Nevertheless, as London becomes a warzone, its citizens display intense trepidation about the advancing Martians. Londoners are awakened to a “vivid sense of danger” around dawn and told to flee their houses (Wells 2019, p. 89). Reality sends the British into a state of utter panic and a “roaring wave of fear” (Wells 2019, p. 99). In fact, Wells entitles Chapter 16 in Book 1 “The Exodus from London” – a clear religious allusion to the Biblical exodus of the Jews fleeing slavery in Egypt, led by Moses. This metaphor implies the magnitude of the danger imposed in the form of a whole race extinction. The fugitives, as the narrator calls them, while leaving London, are described as lost, haggard, weary, and unclean. The narrator’s brother encounters people acting weirdly, like talking to themselves and beating invisible things in the air. Streets are congested with cabs, carts, wagons, carriages, and walking people. People are yelling to make way and children cry and stumble. Wells describes the situation as follows:

Never before in the history of the world had such a mass of human beings moved and suffered together... And this was no disciplined march; it was a stampede—a stampede gigantic and terrible—without order and without a goal, six million people unarmed and unprovisioned, driving headlong. It was the beginning of the rout of civilisation, of the massacre of mankind. (2019, p. 111).

It is worth noting here that H. G. Wells imagined this unprecedented stampede in a captivating way. To modern readers, the image might not be novel, though dreadful. We have seen such gatherings of millions of people on different occasions, and the world wars witnessed such massive grouping. However, to Victorian readers, the visual is unfathomable and frightening. The physical demolition of streets, buildings, and landscapes caused by the invasion is also tremendous. The narrator compares his neighborhood to “a valley of ashes” and expresses his bewilderment that “[n]ever before in the history of warfare had destruction been so indiscriminate and so universal” (Wells 2019, p. 63).



Wells is a writer who combines science, imagination and social critique (Danahay 2003, p. 28). However, his political vision about the concept of an empire was not critical. He believed that the British Empire was the “precursor of a world-state or nothing” and the English-speaking community was the “leader and mediator” towards creating a world of commonwealth (cited in Parrinder 1997, p. 67). For example, the white supremacy and the ignorance of the colonized people is clearly depicted in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* which gives such an account of European invasion of the Igbo tribes. The initial reaction of the natives is curiosity then disbelief followed by fear. One village, Abame, is reported to have been wiped out. This happens after a White man comes to the village riding “an iron horse.” The protagonist, Okonkwo, upon listening to this, assumes the man is an albino, but his friend clarifies that this man was different. The native Nigerians had never seen a white-skinned human before. The first people who saw the man ran away, but the courageous ones touched him. However, their Oracle informed them that this man would bring destruction and instability, so they kill the man and tie his “iron horse” to a tree so that it does not run away. The *savagery* of the Igbo men, as viewed by the Europeans, is later met with an eradication of the whole village. Obierika, the man reporting the incident, expresses his fear of what happened as he had heard before about white men who made “powerful guns” and “took slaves away across the seas” but he did not believe the stories. An elderly man among them wonders if these albinos strayed from their land and came to their clan by mistake. These statements indicate how unaware the indigenous peoples of occupied lands had been before being invaded. The same applies to the English prior to the Martian invasion.

During times of war, people of a certain community are to help each other survive. However, the British demonstrate divergent attitudes towards each other under the predicament they are in. Solidarity, for instance, is manifested in the brother’s journey with Miss and Mrs. Elphinstone. The two women are being attacked by three men who want to steal their wagon, and the brother valiantly and gallantly defends the women, fighting with the men then accompanying them to ensure their safety. Mrs. Elphinstone is looking for her spouse, just like the narrator is. H. G. Wells indirectly emphasizes marital relationships, aiming to restore faith in love, this could be related to the romantic nature of Wells and his controversial love affairs. The narrator constantly mentions his wife and his anxiety for her safety. He imagines her terrified and mourning his death as he never came back.

On the other hand, uncivilized behavior is demonstrated on certain occasions in the novel. *Grotesque* is the word the narrator uses to describe the way he and the curate race to the peephole in the wall, striking, thrusting, and kicking each other. Their way of thinking and habits are totally diverse, and confinement only amplifies the gap between them. The narrator is increasingly annoyed by the curate’s carelessness and lack of control over his consumption of food and drink. The man drives him crazy, forcing him to behave in a base manner.

On his way back from Letterhead, before the horrors of war ensue, the narrator boyishly feels excited about the prospect of a war. He describes the sensations as schoolboy dreams of battle and heroism; a sudden feeling of bravery overwhelms him, and he wants to be face-to-face with death. Ironically, he receives what he wishes for, but the experience is more frightening and daunting than expected. According to Danahay, what makes *The War of the Worlds* different from other invasion narratives of London, like Le Queux’s *The Great War in England*, is that it conveys the emotional impact and the gradual panic which rises in London as the Martians approach (2003, p. 237). Mrs. Elphinstone, for example, has never been out of England, so she would rather “die than trust herself friendless in a foreign country” (Wells 2019, p. 114) by leaving England. She imagines that the French and the Martians might be similar, hence she grows “increasingly hysterical, fearful, and depressed” (Wells 2019, p. 114). Comparing the Martians to the French is significant here as the English always feared the possibility of a French invasion even though the French wars occurred decades before.



The sanity of the characters, particularly the narrator, the curate, and the artilleryman, are disturbed by the confinement they are subject to. The curate is frequently talking to himself, raging about the loss of souls and diversion from God and religious teachings. The narrator relates that the old man becomes “lethargic, unreasonable” (Wells 2019, p. 124). While his anxiety for his wife wears out and pains his mind, he becomes very irritable. After a few days of being locked in the house, he starts keeping distance from the curate and staying alone.

According to Madley, establishing colonies was shaped by a “culture of terror” which was the result of “geographic isolation, imperial neglect, state brutality, and exterminatory government campaigns against escaped convicts, as well as fear of Aborigines” (2008, p.81). Therefore, physical and psychological stress overwhelmed the society in early colonies. Colonialism not only threatens the mental stability of parties involved but also the physical. Two sides of the dilemma can be discussed here: the physical effects on the colonized and the colonizer. To start with, all the characters in the novel go through bodily changes caused by distress, fatigue, thirst, and hunger; this explains why the artilleryman does not recognize the protagonist when they meet in Putney again. As for the colonizer, the Martians are able to adapt to the gravity, atmosphere, and terrain on Earth. However, their bodies fail to protect them from the terrestrial bacteria humans are immune against.

Similarly, in European colonization of Africa and the Indies, the colonizers have succumbed to fevers, malarial diseases, and other epidemics for hundreds of years. On the other hand, African and Pacific Islanders have suffered from diseases like tuberculosis in British cities. In Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*, several pages are dedicated to the English Mr. Rochester’s complaints about the fever he went through from upon his arrival to Jamaica. He could neither tolerate the weather nor the lush green plants and bright colors.

More than once, the narrator compares the human-alien experience to that of human-animal and human-human. He raises moral questions about the treatment of animals and colonized natives. The narrator, losing his last sense of humanity, acts in an animalistic way because he seeks safety. As the curate threatens both their lives by exposing them to the Martians, the narrator is left with no choice but to strike the curate on the head with a blade, making him lose consciousness. He does not intend to kill him; however, he leads him to being killed by the Martians: “I was fierce with *fear* (emphasis added) ...With one last touch of humanity I turned the blade back and struck him with the butt. He went headlong forward and lay stretched on the ground” (Wells 2019, p. 149). The narrator displays little remorse because he does not get the chance to reflect on what he has done. His increased sense of alarm and fear put him on the edge. He is immediately drawn into action when the handling-machine’s tentacle invades the house. He creeps and hides in the room in the scullery, fully focused on staying alive. Only later does he reflect on the horror of the event. He still does not feel guilty, yet the memory haunts him. In the darkness of the silent night, he feels close to God and stands his own trial. He finds that his action is justified and leaves it to the reader to judge him.

This aggressive scene is suggestive of the scene between Kayerts and Carlier in Joseph Conrad’s *An Outpost of Progress* (1896) mentioned in the beginning of the chapter. Fear of death conjures the basest instincts. Writhing from hunger and thirst in the end, the narrator eats wild mushrooms, drinks brown shallow water, and gnaws on some Martian red weeds. He even contemplates feeding on a stray dog. Wells reveals how survival is Man’s utmost priority. In order to stay alive, an individual would acquiesce and disregard their own morality. In one passage, he relates the uncivilized disorder which results in train stations in London:

People were fighting savagely for standing-room in the carriages even at two o’clock. By three, people were being trampled and crushed even in Bishopsgate Street, a couple of hundred yards or more from Liverpool Street station; revolvers were fired, people stabbed,



and the policemen who had been sent to direct the traffic, exhausted and infuriated, were breaking the heads of the people they were called out to protect (2019, p. 99).

Failure to act like civilized humans is a recurring scene in the novel. Wells gives powerful graphic portrayal of people's reactions based on his observation of the Victorian society. The incident where a man drops a heap of coin in the middle of a London Street while everyone is fleeing and gets trampled by a cart is another disturbing depiction of what the survival instinct could urge humans to do (Wells 2019, p. 107). Fugitives in the streets were oblivious to what was happening around them. The image created in that chaotic scene is troubling: horses staggering, carts turning, carriages smashing, and people pushed. It evokes images of Armageddon and the end of the world, where people are concerned solely about themselves.

When the narrator finally emerges from the house in which he was imprisoned for 15 days, he experiences a strange emotion which "the poor brutes" (Wells 2019, p. 56) the British dominate know well. He feels as a rabbit might feel after finding manual laborers digging the foundations of a house in the land where his burrow was. He feels "a sense of dethronement" in that he is "no longer a master, but an animal among the animals, under the Martian heel" (Wells 2019, p. 155).

The previous passage is a very significant allusion to imperialism and colonialism. When dominant powers invade or control a land, its people feel inferior and weak as their most basic right of freedom is taken away. In certain speculations, the narrator stands to defend the Martians' actions and behavior by comparing them to those of humans in their treatment of animals and other humans. For example, when discussing how the Martians feed by injecting fresh blood into their veins, he acknowledges that it is "horribly repulsive to us" just like "our carnivorous habits would seem to an intelligent rabbit" (Wells 2019, p. 134). That is, humans should not be offended by Martian habits when they take the same actions. Wells must not be misunderstood here; he is not arguing for the rights of Martians. Instead, he is criticizing the double standards which the British demonstrate. According to Gailor, the novel highlights the concern with moral issues, "which is probably the real motivation behind all invasion fantasies" (1996, p. 271).

H. G. Wells' message in *The War of the Worlds* is that we, as a human race, are not immune to extinction. Unethical practices, social injustice, and inequality are destructive forces even when technological progress occurs. Machinery and weaponry cannot protect humans; in the novel, the British army fails. It is only a strike of luck, and divine intervention, that saves the world of the human race and earthly living things from extinction. The process of the invasion and its effects are analogous in every sense to that of colonization. The only difference is that the indigenous inhabitants of colonized lands could not be saved by any means. They had to eventually yield to foreign conquest and adapt to the new world.

4. Conclusions

Wells' innovative production lies in narrating an original type of invasion by inhabitants of Mars. *The War of the Worlds* questions the station of human beings as the center of the universe and lords of the worlds. The process of the Martian invasion is breathtaking and horrifying for the English reader due to the authenticity in time and space. His work sheds light on the heinousness of invasion and war. This is a call for moral and ethical reconsiderations of imperialistic and colonial conquests. It also contends that the views of the human future must be revisited as our technologies and intelligences are not enough to protect humanity. Moreover, planet Earth is not secure and humans can be suddenly exposed to good or evil coming from outer space.

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خویندنه وه به کی میژووی نوئی بؤ داگیرکاری پیچه وانه له کتییی "جهنگی جیهانه کان" ی تیچ جی ویلز

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پوخته

بزوتنه وه ئەدهیبیه کان به گشتی به هۆی رووداو میژووییه کان پێش خوین، یان له کاتی دامه زانندنیدا، سه ریان هه لداوه. تایه تمه ندییه کان کۆمه لگهی نووسه ر پێگهی خوین له به ره مه میکی ئەدهیبیدا ده دۆزه وه و له ئیوان دپه کانددا ده رده که ون، نه انه ت کاتیک نووسه ر مه به ستیشی نه بیته. پۆمانی "جهنگی جیهانه کان" ی تیچ جی ویلز (۱۸۹۸) نموونه یه کی زیندووی ئەم جو ره به. پۆمانه که له سه رده می کدا نووسراوه، که ئیمپراتۆریه تی به ریتانیا چه ن دین ولاتی داگیر کردوو. به م شیوه یه بیرو که ی داگیرکاری "کۆلۆنیالیزم" گه لی به ریتانیا ی پر کردوو له داگیرکاری و ده رته نجامه کانی، به لاهم جیاوازییه که له لایه ن "ویلز" ه وه له پێگهی و ئانکردنی داگیرکاری پیچه وانیه ئینگلته را له لایه ن بوونه وه ره کانی مه ریخه وه تیشکی خراوه ته سه ر. نیشان دانی بوونه وه ره مه ریخیه کان ئەو پاساوانه نیشان ده دات، که ئیمپریالیسته کان و لایه نگرانیان بؤ ره وایه تیدان به داگیرکاریه کانیان به کاریان هیناوه.

وشه کللییه کان: پێبازی میژووی نوئی، داگیرکاری پیچه وانه، تیچ جی ویلز، شه ری جیهانه کان.

القراءة التاريخية الجديدة للاستعمار المعاكسة في رواية "حرب العوالم" ل إتش جي ويلز

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ملخص

تشكل الحركات الأدبية بشكل عام من خلال الأحداث التاريخية السابقة أو التي تنشأ أثناء إنشائها. تجد سمات مجتمع المؤلف طريقها من خلال عمل أدبي وتكمن بين السطور، حتى عندما لا يقصدها المؤلف. حرب العوالم (1898) ل إتش جي ويلز هي مثال حي على هذا النوع. كتبت الرواية في وقت غزت فيه الإمبراطورية البريطانية عدة دول. وهكذا ملأت فكرة الاستعمار الشعب البريطاني بالغزو وعواقبه. ومع ذلك، فقد سلط ويلز الضوء على الاختلاف من خلال تصوير استعمار عكسي لإنجلترا بواسطة كائنات فضائية من المريخ. يصور تمثيل مارتينز التبريرات التي استخدمها الإمبراليون وأنصارهم من أجل إضفاء الأخلاق والمصادقة على أفعالهم.

الكلمات الدالة: المذهب التاريخية الجديدة، للاستعمار المعاكسة، تیچ جی ویلز، حرب العوالم