

Tribhuvan University

Cultural Clash and Traumatic Experiences: A Deep Explication of *The War of the*

Worlds by H. G. Wells

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Letter of Recommendation

Ms Sharmila Thapa has completed her thesis entitled "Cultural Clash and Traumatic Experiences: A Deep Explication of *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells" under my supervision. She carried out her research from 2069/01/12 to 2069/06/1-21 B.S. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled " Cultural Clash and Traumatic Experiences: A Deep Explication of *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Ms Sharmila Thapa has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This project entitled “Cultural Clash and Traumatic Experiences: A Deep Explication of *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells” is an attempt to analyze traumatic experiences collectively faced by the British people due to sudden and random invasion of the Martians. It also examines the traumatic experiences of British colonized people and the Martians themselves. The all-engulfing and wide-spreading warfare waged by the Martians is presented as their attempt to replace the well-established British culture and civilization with their own without compromising and leaving any trace. Mad with their superior complex, the Martians attack Britain and inflict untold pain, suffering, torture and misery to the common people. The so-called technologically advanced and sophisticated civilization of the Martians has nothing to offer to people except unbearable and intolerable traumatic experiences. Moreover, it also probes to examine the underlying causes and dreadful consequences of the cultural warfare between two alien races – the Martians and human beings.

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I. Wellsian Philosophy of War to End War: An Examination

The War of the Worlds by H. G. Wells presents the interplanetary cultural warfare between the Martians and human beings. The Martians have developed wonderful culture and civilization by exploiting the power of science and technology, which makes them hypocrite and cynical. Thinking that their culture is perfect and complete, they wage a war against human beings in order to establish their culture by replacing the existing one. The clash between these two cultures causes no gains instead it brings only pains, sufferings, troubles, problems and traumas to the people. In this sense, *The War of the Worlds* can be analyzed as an epitome of cultural trauma, which foregrounds the consequences outcomes of cultural war between two enemies who are supported by advanced and sophisticated science and technology.

This project tempts to prove the hypothesis that H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* is and epitome of cultural trauma collectively faced by the British people due to the warfare waged by the technologically and scientifically superior race, the Martians, which compels them to live a cursed and degraded life full of pains, suffering, torture, distress and misery.

The extra-ordinary warfare presented in *The War of the Worlds* is spread everywhere and affects all living organisms including human beings. The Martians are so uncompromising and abstinence that there is not any chance of truce and communication. They are proud of their culture, civilization and development and want to uproot earthly things at any cost without leaving any of the traces. Due to this kind of superiority feeling, they themselves and the British people too are compelled to suffer a lot and even the Martians meet their extinction. English people also get punishment of their excessive hubris, pride and evil venture to attack the weaker ones i.e. Tasmanians.

The War of the Worlds brings two alien races – the Martians and human beings – having two distinct cultures into conflict and dips into depth in order to examine the internal causes and consequences. The central story moves around the periphery of Mars versus Earth war i.e. the Martians versus human beings' war. Though it is mainly concerned with the interplanetary warfare between the Martians and British people, the intra-planetary warfare between the English people and other colonized people like Tasmanians cannot be over-looked or over-shadowed. So, it is not about the single war but about several wars. But, the root and underlying cause of these wars is to prove themselves (war mongers) and their culture superior to others. To analyze such situation in the text the research has made a deliberate and purposeful choice to analyze the text from the perspective of cultural trauma as a critical apparatus. As the main objective of the research is to show traumatic experiences of the British people caused by cultural clash in *The War of the Worlds*, it has incorporated the theoretical modality of cultural trauma which the researcher thinks as the best modality to analyze the text properly and pay due and sincere tribute to it. So, it will incorporate the ideas put forward by various theorists and critics including Arthur O. Lewis, Ingo Cornils, Krishan Kumar, John Huntington, Patrick Parrinder and others.

H. G. Wells was an English writer best known for such science fiction novels as *The Time Machine*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The Invisible Man* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. He was a prolific writer of both fiction and non-fiction, and produced works in many different genres, including contemporary novels, history, politics, and social commentary. He was also an outspoken socialist often sympathizing with pacifist views. Wells' earliest specialized training was in biology, and his thinking on ethical matters took place in a specifically and fundamentally Darwinian context. His

later works become increasingly political and didactic, and only his early science fiction novels are widely read today. Wells is sometimes referred to as The Father of Science Fiction.

The writings of Wells offer a highly dialectical vision of science and technology as a great vehicle of progress as well as cause of degeneration. Therefore, he praised science and technology for their tremendous benefits to human beings and condemned them for the dangers and threats posed to human beings. The credit to popularize Science Fiction all over the world goes to H. G. Wells. In his almost all Science Fictions, he shows the vanity and pride of human beings due to the feigned power gifted by scientific and technological inventions. From quite early in his career, he sought a better way to organize society, and wrote a number of Utopian novels. Usually starting with the world rushing to catastrophe, until people realize a better way of living: whether by mysterious gases from a comet causing people to behave rationally (In The Days of the Comet), or a world council of scientists taking over, as in The Shape of Things to Come (1933. This depicted the impending World War, with cities being destroyed by aerial bombs. In almost all of his books, he sought a better way to organize society

The Sleeper Awakes is H. G. Wells' wildly imaginative story of London in the twenty-second century and the man who by accident becomes owner and master of the world. In 1897 a Victorian gentleman falls into a sleep from which he cannot be waked. During his two centuries of slumber he becomes the Sleeper, the most well known and powerful person in the world. All property is given to the Sleeper to be administered by a Council on his behalf. The common people, increasingly oppressed, view the Sleeper as a mythical liberator whose awakening will free them from misery. *The Sleeper* awakes in 2100 to a futuristic London adorned with wondrous

technological trappings yet staggering under social injustice and increasing conflict. His awakening sends shock waves throughout London, from the highest meetings of the Council to the workers laboring in factories in the bowels of the city. Daring rescues and villainous treachery abound as workers and capitalists fight desperately for control of the Sleeper.

The Invisible Man is an 1897 science fiction novella by H.G. Wells. Wells' novel was originally serialized in Pearson's Magazine in 1897, and published as a novel the same year. The Invisible Man of the title is Griffin, a scientist who theorizes that if a person's refractive index is changed to exactly that of air and his body does not absorb or reflect light, then he will be invisible. He successfully carries out this procedure on himself, but cannot become visible again, becoming mentally unstable as a result. The invisible man, Griffin, creates the 'Reign of Terror' among the villages of southern England and involves in immoral and insane acts (Ruddick 318). His elusive intellect and unfettered pursuit of science leads him towards his own doom and finally he is clubbed to death by a terrified but enraged mob. Thus, *The Invisible Man* shows the excess of scientific and technological excess.

In *The Time Machine* (1895), the protagonist is an amateur inventor or scientist living in London who is never named; he is identified simply as *The Time Traveler*. Having demonstrated to friends using a miniature model that time is a fourth dimension, and that a suitable apparatus can move back and forth in this fourth dimension, he builds a full-scale model capable of carrying himself. He sets off on a journey into the future. Dividing humanity into two trans-human species: the Eloi as hyper-refined and decadent, and the Morlocks as crude and degenerate and showing the extreme brutalization of the Morlocks by the Eloi, Wells warns that an irrational organization of society can produce monstrous results. Thus, in a ruthlessly negative

and nihilistic vision, Wells depicts a terrifying future of humanity. It is a portrayal of adventurous man experimenting with the power of science.

Another scientific romance of Wells, *The First Men in the Moon* (1901) tells the story of a journey to the moon carried out by the two protagonists, the brilliant but eccentric scientist Dr. Cavor and the impoverished businessman Mr. Bedford with the help of an anti-gravity device called 'Sphere'. They have two different agenda - Cavor hopes to discover a utopian society and Bedford is purely interested in monetary gain. After reaching the moon, they find the underground civilization of the ant-like creatures called the Selenites. Attracted to the efficiency and scientific organization of the society, Cavor chooses to stay on the moon but Bedford returns immediately. In *The First Men in the Moon*, Wells turns away from the apocalyptic pessimism of the earliest fantasies towards some more constructive vision of human possibilities.

The World Set Free was written in 1913 and published early in 1914, and it is the latest of a series of three fantasias of possibility, stories which all turn on the possible developments in the future of some contemporary force or group of forces. It was written under the immediate shadow of the *Great War* (321). Every intelligent person in the world felt that disaster was impending and knew no way of averting it, but few of us realized in the earlier half of 1914 how near the crash was to us. The reader will be amused to find that here it is put off until the year 1956. It is the depiction of fictional 'atomic bombs,' which eerily prefigure the development of real nuclear weapons.

H. G. Wells was torn between two visions - one of salvation and one of doom. He was so obsessed with the future he invented a time machine to take him there. Writing at the end of the last century, he pioneered a new kind of fiction, science fiction. He forecast the 20th century so vividly and accurately he became known as

"The Man Who Invented Tomorrow" (Kumar 25). He saw super highways, overcrowded cities, computers, video cassette players to see novels come to life, televisions to tell the news, tanks used in wars, military use of airplanes, and bombing of cities. In 1911 he forecast a new type of weapon, an atomic weapon, the atomic bomb. He saw them out of control. His scientific romances tended to minimize the role of individual heroes, took an evolutionary perspective, and held a bleak view of the future. Several novels have the protagonist as nameless, and often powerless, in the face of natural forces. Wells also wrote dozens of short stories and novellas. Wells also wrote nonfiction.

The War of the Worlds was published in the Victorian era when the belief in science and technology was being questioned and religious orthodoxy was waning. After its publication in 1898, the readers and critics received *The War of the Worlds* both positively as well as negatively. It has been interpreted variously as British imperialism, Darwinism, utopianism and generally as Victorian fears and prejudices. It has influenced literature and Medias and has been adopted as films, radio dramas, comic books, television series and parallel stories by other authors. It was only written a few decades after Darwin published his theory, yet it shows how quickly and powerfully his theory impacted the world, both scientifically and religiously. In the novel we see our planet invaded and unmercifully attacked by Martians. The protagonist of the novel is depicted as a sensible, intelligent human being who we as readers know ultimately survives the attack because he tells it in the past tense. Through the text, Wells makes it obvious that the protagonist is fully aware of technology and what it has to offer. *The War of the Worlds* was something like his eleventh, though he was already so prolific that it is hard to keep track with any accuracy (Kumar 135). Due to its apocalyptic and pessimistic vision, it becomes

dystopia. Instead of stimulating the utopian imagination, it spreads a spectre of death and destruction without any insurance of reconstruction and regeneration of the world. It was not begotten from years of agonizing about human destiny, but from a chance remark that Frank Wells made to H. G. Wells as the brothers were walking through well-manicured and unutterably self-satisfied Surrey (223). Comparing with *Percival Lowell's Mars* (1895), Ruddick suggests how confidently Wells was able to create convincing Martians by extrapolating from some of the distinguished astronomer's speculations while ignoring others as irrelevant or wrong. He further says:

For Lowell, "evolution on [Mars's] surface must be similarly advanced" Wells, approaching the issue from a Huxleyan perspective, saw that "older" also implied that Martian life-forms might have grown more degenerate, its atmosphere less hospitable than Earth's. Lowell's "planet-wide" Martian system of canals presupposes an advanced technology at the behest of a will unweakened by terrestrial-style factional politics . . . On the other hand, Wells saw that Lowell's idea that Martians would be "twenty-seven times as strong as we" thanks to their lower gravity was totally misleading when it came to describing how Martians might move unaided on Earth. (Ruddick 318)

H. G. Wells was highly influenced by T. H. Huxley and was aware of Darwinism and supported the idea of 'struggle for survival and survival of the fittest' (Gunn 217). The advanced and sophisticated weapons that the Martians developed are not suitable for themselves rather they (the weapons) make the Martians lazy, degenerated and devolved. The excessive power and supremacy of the Martians make them unsympathetic and uncompromising. In this sense, their change is not evolution but of devolution.

The War of the Worlds was only written a few decades after Darwin published his theory, yet it shows how quickly and powerfully his theory impacted the world, both scientifically and religiously. In the novel we see our planet invaded and unmercifully attacked by Martians. The protagonist of the novel is depicted as a sensible, intelligent human being who we as readers know ultimately survives the attack because he tells it in the past tense. Through the text, Wells makes it obvious that the protagonist is fully aware of technology and what it has to offer. Relating the book with Darwinism, Rose comments:

The War of the Worlds, which is the best known and most influential of all alien contact stories, is a Darwinism fable, depicting an interplanetary struggle for survival. Wells chooses as his narrator a philosophical writer who is at work on a series of papers prophesying the development of moral ideas as civilization progresses. The Martian invasion interrupts the narrator's work in mid-sentence, evidently just he was about to sketch an advanced and humane future; instead of a version of utopia, the narrator is compelled to portray the collapse of society and the reduction of men to anonymous creatures, scabbling like animals to remain alive. (133)

While watching the Martians within the tripods in the beginning of the invasion, the narrator took note, "I began to compare the Martians to human machines, to ask myself for the first time in my life how an ironclad or a steam engine would seem to an intelligent lower animal" (52). The narrator, with his clearly scientific viewpoint on the situation, was cool and collected even through the rest of the novel; his survival can be attributed to this disposition. Those who understand technology and science and embrace them are more aware of themselves and the world around them, because

whether we like it or not, it is human nature. Because he was aware of technology and its reason for existence, he acted with reason when his life was at stake.

Envisioning mentally, physically, culturally and technologically superior Martians; H. G. Wells warns human beings of the impending cultural warfare against the alien race. The Martians have uplifted themselves from the ordinary level. They have changed their internal mechanisms as well as mode of life due to their advanced science and technology. The mental evolutions of the Martians “may entail horrific social even physiological, alternations” (Gannon 42). This change is not useful even for themselves because they can’t adjust themselves in the changed situations. Their science and technology makes them completely antagonistic, which is reflected even in their physical appearance. It means, they seem to be completely frightening and terrifying. The possibility of the existence of living beings in other planets, which is one of the main concerns of today, was projected by H. G. Wells before more than two centuries. Reading *The War of the Worlds*, he further suggests "man would have to abandon his supreme confidence in the future" (36). Though human beings are supposed to the superior race of this world, they should not be over confident and proud of themselves as there may be the existence of other creatures in other planets like the Martians. He hints towards possible danger and annihilation of human beings due to the evolution of the other races. Commenting on *The War of the Worlds* as a fantasy about evolution and genocide John Batchelor says:

. . . the Martians in *The War of the Worlds*-themselves evolved from manlike creatures - express a Wellsian wish when they blast the smug Victorian dormitory towns of Surrey and Sussex with their death-rays. Wells has his Martians land on Horsell Common, near Woking, a nondescript open space in London's commuter belt lived in by dull

respectable people whom Wells enjoys annihilating. He describes his working methods: he 'would take his bicycle of an afternoon and note the houses and cottages and typical inhabitants and passers-by, to be destroyed after tea by Heat-Ray or smothered in the Red Weed'. (288)

The Martians are presented as culturally superior and technologically advanced. They attack people randomly by using their highly-advanced weapons. The death and destruction in the novel are described in epic- scale. The terroristic mentality of the Martians is clearly exposed here, who only want to destroy humanity and human civilization. The Martians are indiscriminate to kill and destroy everyone and everything that comes within their touch. Due to their advanced culture, people in the earth get only pain, suffering and torture.

The depiction of the strategic warfare between the Martians and the English people is similar to the war between the European colonizers and other weaker people. Edward Gorey argues that in *The War of the Worlds* Wells' aim or focus is on total extermination of humanity and breaking away of social order. He wants to show the extremity and cruelty in wars, which is without any morality and ethics as "massive, intelligent aliens from the Mars touchdown in Victorian England and threaten to destroy the civilized world, humanity's vaunted knowledge proves to be of little use" (260). The Martians use very much advanced and sophisticated strategy of war that "it is still a matter of wonder that they are able to slay men so swiftly and so silently" (28). The condition of England becomes dangerously unsteady and difficult after the arrival of the superior technology-wielding Martians. Human beings' highly-vaunted and highly-acknowledged scientific and technological power is worthless and fruitless in front of the Martians.

Trauma refers to an event, series of events, or context that is emotionally

overwhelming. The individual feels helpless or powerless to control the event(s) or situation. Trauma is used mostly in medicine and psychology. But, there is a current effort to borrow the concept of trauma from medicine and psychiatry and to introduce it into sociological theory and even. In literature, the author explicates the notion of cultural trauma as applicable to the theory of social change. S/he defines cultural trauma as the culturally defined and interpreted shock to the cultural tissue of a society, and presents a model of the traumatic sequence, describing typical conditions under which cultural trauma emerges and evolves. Cultural trauma is treated as a link in the ongoing chain of social changes; depending on the number of concrete circumstances, cultural trauma may be a phase in the constructive formation of culture or in the destructive cycle of cultural decay.

The word trauma comes from Latin, meaning “wound.” In this case trauma refers to a psychological rather than a physical wound. It overwhelms an individual’s ability to use normal coping mechanisms to adapt to a situation. It disrupts an individual’s frame of reference i.e. beliefs about themselves and the world. Cultural trauma is one that we as a social group experience together, with our experience being that of perpetrators, victims, or spectators, with all of us deeply affected by the experience as representing some form of violent interruption to our lives (Habermas 21). It can be defined further as:

Trauma as a cultural process is based on symbolization; this process takes place between the event, which has been traumatogenic for a community, and the establishment of its representation. The analysis of trauma as a cultural phenomenon can be grounded in the outlined concept of cultural memory with such essential dimensions as: communication, reflexivity of the knowledge about the past,

axionormativity, affectivity and, last but not least, orientation toward the future. Collective trauma in particular shows the symbolic, emotional and moral dimensions of memory as a cultural phenomenon, the temporality of which is not limited to the past in the present, but also encompasses the future. (307)

Trauma is a symbol that condenses the tragic experiences of the age that saw two world wars. Their extreme manifestation is genocide. This relatively recent term, introduced into international law by Rafał Lemkin, is crucial in the semantics of contemporary, universal humanism. Trauma was initially understood as a psychological phenomenon – it appeared in the works of the French psychiatrists Pierre Janet and Jean-Martin Charcot, who had encountered the problem of personality disorders among World War I veterans (315). Trauma theory shifts the question from “Why did this happen to you and how can you change to prevent it from happening again?” to “What is your response to what has happened and how can you manage that response so as to feel better?”

The understanding of trauma has frequently been dominated by interpretations rooted in the psychoanalytic tradition. According to this approach, defense mechanisms are a key issue and successful therapy requires bringing the experience out into the open – its articulation. Although analogies between psychoanalytically perceived individual trauma and collective trauma may be useful, in a cultural analysis of trauma attention should be focused on “reflexive processes of communication, interaction and symbolization” (Whitbeck 126). Cultural trauma indicates the individual, community and intergenerational effects of the terrorizing and traumatizing events like genocide, warfare, ethnic cleansing, massacres, forced assimilation and so on. It is the intense feeling of fear, mental stress, distress and grief

in response to harmful mental, emotional or physical situations or events.

Thus, Wells imagined culturally and technologically superior race, the Martians who turn against human beings and their culture. *The War of the Worlds* is all about interplanetary warfare between human beings and the Martians in order to save and establish their own culture. The advanced intelligence of the Martians gives them the power to create powerful weapons, such as Heat-Ray guns that can level whole towns; tripods with hundred- foot legs, that give them mobility; and even flying machines, which, in 1898, were beyond human technology. The Martians with such weapons give a lot of torture, pain and suffering to human beings. To explore such situation, the research depends on the theoretical modality of cultural trauma. It divides the research in three chapters. The first chapter is the overall introduction of the research including hypothesis, objectives and literature review. The second chapter about textual analysis including theoretical modality in embedded form. Similarly, the third chapter is the conclusion of the research.

II. Cultural Clash and Traumatic Experiences: A Deep Explication of *The War of the Worlds*

The first major story of the interplanetary warfare, *The War of the Worlds* envisages the superior alien races that could travel to earth and vehemently defeat and destroy human beings, thereby decentering and dethroning humanity as the highest form of evolution and destroying their culture and civilization. The war presented in the novel is a cultural war waged to protect and establish their culture. Human beings want to preserve their culture and civilization from the claws of the technologically and scientifically superior race – the Martians on the other hand the Martians too want to uproot human culture and civilization and replace with their own. Due to all-engulfing and wide-ranging warfare between human beings and the Martians, human beings get heart-rending pains and sufferings. The traumatic and distressing experience of human beings makes their life a living hell. The arrival of the Martians on the earth does lead their civilization towards progress but towards conflict and tension. Even the Martians mission to establish their culture and civilization in the earth becomes self-destructive and counter-productive to themselves.

In *The War of the Worlds*, the story is told retrospectively by an unnamed narrator, a philosophically trained person, who witnessed many of the events of the destruction of the Martians; and reports them. The Martians are the aliens from Mars, which are evolved from the ordinary condition of life and are developed culturally, mentally, technologically and scientifically. Although they are technologically capable beings, they show no sign of emotion and sympathy and compassion. When the Mars becomes extremely cold and unsuitable to live in, the Martians descend on earth using their advanced weapons called cylinder. Their arrival on the Earth is like the arrival of the colonizers in other unfamiliar lands. Immediately after they descend

in the Earth, they start their plan of destroying whole of England using the advanced and highly sophisticated weapons like Heat-Rays, Black-Smoke and Tripod-fighting machines. Within short period, the Deputation is destroyed and a number of other innocent people are killed. Similarly, trees, bushes, and buildings burst into flames as the concentrated heat come. As the world around them catches fire, the fear and terror-stricken onlookers run away in order to escape from the wide-spread chaos and disorder.

There is high competition to keep up and establish their culture and civilization on earth. The Martians struggle all to carry their so-called their advanced civilization on earth even at the cost of their life. There is life and death war between human beings and the Martians. The death and destruction sets the pattern for many days. The Martians appear to be unstoppable. Both the urban and rural areas are equally affected. They can cause bloody massacre of several people easily in a moment. Their appliances and weapons are invisible. When the Martians march towards London, the then greatest town of the world, they release a poisonous black smoke that suffocates everything and "there is not defense against it" (46). The news of the massacre spreads to different places and people become terror-stricken. There is confusion and puzzlement among the people about what to do and what not to do. Many people pass sleepless nights. The shops are closed. There not any way out from the present tumultuous and calamitous situation. People get a lot of pains, sufferings, torture and anguish.

The Martians are presented same as the English people, who too wage a war of extermination against the Tasmanians and try to create colonies throughout the world. They destroy everything around them blindly with the help of their advanced weapons. The people are killed, burnt and scalded randomly. The trees and bushes are

burnt and smashed into pieces. The telegrams are disconnected. The infrastructures of development are destroyed. Within one night, the valley has been turned into a valley of ashes and dead bodies. The entire scenario is horrific, terrific and devastating. Never before in the history of the world, has such mass migration taken place. Moreover, such a great massacre of humankind also has not taken place. The suffering, problems and troubles of people are increasing by leaps and bounds. It seems that humanity's rule over the Earth comes to an end.

Thus, the war presented in *The War of the Worlds* is cultural war between the Martians and human beings. This war is an unmatched war as the Martians are scientifically, technologically and culturally superior to human beings. Though the Martians are at first supposed to be harbinger of advanced culture and civilization, they are not found to be so. Instead they are proved as the destroyer of the existing culture and cause of pains and sufferings to human beings. The whole story is about the traumatic experience of human beings due to random attack of the Martians.

Trauma is an extremely distressing experience that causes severe emotional shock and may have long-lasting psychological effects. It is a mental condition caused by severe shock or unpleasant experience especially when the harmful effects last for long time. It is a disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury. Cultural trauma is the collective experience of a group of human beings especially about violent interruption to their life or experience of distress, pain, suffering and agony.

The concept of trauma itself originates from Freud's work in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where he demonstrates that the patient's inner conflict, motivated by a traumatic event, would become an outer reality through the 'acting out' of internal dramas. Contemporary thinking about trauma has been rooted in the work of

scholar Caruth, heralded as having produced some of the most pioneering work on trauma to date. In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena (Caruth 156). Sztompka defines cultural trauma as the culturally defined and interpreted shock to the cultural tissue of a society, and presents a model of the traumatic sequence, describing typical conditions under which cultural trauma emerges and evolves (449). He further defines it as:

The most noticeable symptom of a condition conducive to trauma is that people talk about it and want to do something about it. Even in the most repressive regimes, if they cannot talk publicly, they more than substitute for it in the private circles of family, close friends, and acquaintances. The condition of cultural disorientation, accompanied by social concern and expressed by intensified emotional, intellectual, organizational activism, provides a necessary background for the cultural trauma to appear. It is by no means a sufficient condition. Precipitating traumatizing situations or events, and cultural reinterpretations of these, are the next stages of the traumatic sequence. (456)

Assuming that collective trauma is a concept referring to very diverse traumatogenic events, one may – albeit with reserve – agree with the statement that a given situation may be traumatogenic in one socio-cultural context and non traumatogenic in another (Smelser, 36) – at least in regard to the initiation of the reflexive process of memory. Thus, the cultural process of collective trauma is not restricted to the psychological dynamics of mechanisms of defense and adaptation – ‘dealing’ with trauma or

‘working through’ trauma. A traumatogenic event must be associated with a strong negative affect that accompanies defining a tragedy, shame, a collective catastrophe, in order for it to have a traumatic impact 40–41). Cultural trauma has these features: revolution (whether victorious or failed), racial riots; forced migration or deportation, ethnic cleansing; genocide, extermination, mass murder; acts of terrorism or violence; assassination of the political leader, resignation of a high-ranking official; opening secret archives and revealing the truth about the past; revisionist interpretation of national heroic tradition; collapse of an empire, lost war (Caruth 452). The cultural understanding of trauma is in no way undermined by the fact that trauma has an affective dimension.

The War of the Worlds allegorizes cultural warfare between the Martians and human beings in which human beings face a lot of pains and sufferings due to their inability to challenge the Martians. The Martians though are scientifically and technologically developed, can’t face the rapid change of the Mars and descend on earth with the aim of establishing themselves here. Both the British people as well the Martians are narcissistically proud of their culture and civilization. British people are celebrating their development thinking that it is the best one in the world. They think that they have removed all kinds of pains and sufferings through their scientific development. They celebrate the accomplishment of good life and assume "full opportunity to develop intimate and satisfying personal relationship" (Elliott 130). Harmony, co-ordination, co-operation, unity and uniformity among the people are indispensable and unalienable characteristics of the then society. The interrelationship among the people is developed and fostered on the bedrock of give-and-take principle. The pure and sacred bond is completely untouched by a narrow sense of selfishness and self-centeredness. They enjoy their supreme power and control

everything, and dismiss the possibility of other superior races as the narrator says:

With infinite complacency men went to and fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter . . . no one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human danger, or thought of them only to dismiss the idea of life upon them as impossible or improbable . . . at most, terrestrial men fancied there might be other men upon Mars, perhaps inferior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise. (7)

People couldn't believe or even think of the superior race. If they anticipate any possibility of the existence of other creatures, they indeed anticipate of inferior races to them to whom they can control and dominate. There is no threat to world peace. Everything is as usual. Nothing disturbs and hampers them. During the time, the Martians fire their missiles towards earth; the atmosphere of the earth is superbly exuberant and exhilarating. "No one seems to have troubled to look for the fallen mass" (13). They don't bother to observe the Martians' landing by spending their valuable time. Moreover, they try to avoid their attraction to the fallen cylinder containing "dead men from Mars" as they believe (16). The boys are playing "touch in and out" game (17). It seems human civilization is developed full-fledged.

The proud and vanity of human beings doesn't remain for long. Soon it gets its tragic fate. When the Martians arrive, they have to fight against them to preserve their culture and civilization because the Martians are not compromising in nature. They want to establish themselves as well as their civilization on the earth even at the cost of their existence. So they wage a war against human beings and in the war human beings lose many things. Thousands of people were killed in the war as "by the toll of a billion deaths man has bought his birthright of the earth, and it is his against all

comers; it would still be his were the Martians ten times as mighty as they are. For neither do men live nor die in vain” (171). In this cultural war human beings sacrificed a lot even their highly praised culture and civilization.

Human beings pains and sufferings in *The War of the Worlds* are caused mainly due to their unpreparedness against the future possible danger as well as their weaker weapons and artilleries in front of the Martians’ highly advanced ones. The invasion and attack of the Martians brings crisis, disaster, calamity, catastrophe and misfortune to the human beings. The sufferings of collective human beings can be termed as cultural trauma and “cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness” (Alexanser 1). This fact leads to the fact that trauma is not something naturally existing; it is something constructed by the society.

Destruction or threat to collective values, norms or a culture as a whole is characterized by cultural trauma. Cultural trauma possesses threat to its mechanisms – social agents and contending groups. Cultural trauma can be further clarified as: No discrete historical event or situation automatically or necessarily qualifies in itself as a cultural trauma, and the range of events or situations that may become cultural trauma is enormous . . . mass migrations, wars, mass unemployment and dislocations with rapid social change are nearly certain candidates for trauma, to be sure, but they do not qualify automatically. (Smelser 35-6)

The status of trauma as trauma is dependent on the socio-cultural context of the society at the time of historical event or situation arises. A society emerging from major war, suffering from diminished economic resources, experiencing rampant internal conflict or having shaky social solidarity is more trauma prone than others that are more solid in this respect.

Since culture is the constructor and protector of the identity of a person, when a person nurtured and grown in one culture is placed and migrates to another, he or she may feel “cultural shock” and there may arouse reactions like fear, anger, confusion, repulsion, hatred and alienation. Cultural collision or encounter takes place when one culture is introduced to another culture which is different from it. The meeting of cultures is marked by contestation, struggle and agony that match the tensional relation between the two opponent groups or rivals. In *The War of the Worlds*, the Martians and human beings have the relation of rivals, they fight both to show their power and to save their culture.

The cultural warfare between the Martians and human beings has no benefits to anyone. All the people of England suffer a lot. When the condition is extremely devastating and distressing, people can't bear it and start migrating to save their life. The government can do nothing against the Martians. The surrender of the government in fronts of the Martians makes everything bad. The extreme scarcity of everything including food and water compels people to live a wretched and miserable life. As England especially London and its suburbs become completely unsafe and unfavorable place to live due to the chaotic upheavals of the dispersion of the Heat-Rays and Black Smoke of the Martians, there is no way out for the people except to run away immediately towards safer places.

The immediate pressure enforces people to choose the one and only alternative of prompt and swift emigration without having time to think about the essential provisions. So, "there did not seem to be a living soul “since” the majority of the inhabitants had escaped" (57). As "the flying people increased in number” and the fugitives overcrowded the road, "there were shops half opened in the main street of the place, and people crowded on the pavement and in the doorways and windows,

staring astonished at this extraordinary procession of fugitives that was beginning”

(93). The mass migration becomes the hallmark of *The War of the Worlds* as:

Never before in the history of the world had such a mass of human beings moved and suffered together. The Legendary hosts of Goths and Huns, the hugest armies Asia has ever seen, would have been but a drop in that current. 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 civilization of massacre of mankind. (104)

The situation of England is completely horrendous and dreadful. People have both psychological as well as physical pain and suffering. They are forced to leave the place of origin without determining their destination. The unplanned and headlong migration of people is the indication of awaiting uncertainty and confusion of their life. Forceful entrance of the Martians’ civilization initiates the civilization of massacre, mass extermination and annihilation. Worshippers of the principle of 'might is right', the Martians try their best to create the worst possible scenario forcing people to leave their houses. As people are migrating, “the main road was a boiling stream of people, a torrent of human beings rushing northward, and one pressing on another” (97). They are totally disinterested about the lives of other people except themselves. "This was a whole population in movement" (98). So, “along the margin came those who were on foot, threatened by the wheels, tumbling in the ditches, blundering into one another" (98). The tired, sad and haggard people are rushing away with "their dainty clothes smothered in dust, their weary faces smeared with tears" (99). The condition is degrading day by day. People are forced to live a hellish and degraded

life. Their civilization and culture are about to be finished and are going to be replaced by the Martians' one. The narrator elaborates the massive exodus of people as:

. . . .the roaring wave of fear that swept through the greatest city in the world . . . the stream flight rising swiftly to a torrent, lashing in a foaming tumult round the railway stations, banked up into a horrible struggle about the shipping in the Thames and hurrying by every available channel northward and eastward. By ten o'clock the police organization, and by midday even the railway organizations, were losing coherency, losing shape and efficiency, guttering, softening, running at last in that swift liquefaction of the social body. (92)

Human civilization and culture is going to be collapse. The whole social system is overturned. The phrase 'swift liquefaction of the social body' expresses Wells' extreme hatred towards disorder and panic of people. Through *The War of the Worlds* opens with only portents in the sky above a peaceful England, with people going about their daily business; it is soon filled with complete destruction and devastation. The defense mechanism of British military forces proves to be weak, unable and inefficient. Thus, trauma brings about by 'shocking' events (Sztompka 457). People suddenly find themselves in a cultural world completely at odds with their indigenous cultures, and if this is culturally defined as painful and unbearable (and not as an exotic tourist attraction, or a welcomed new experience) serious collective trauma emerges (454). All human achievements and accomplishments are under constant strain and at risk in *The War of the Worlds*. What we can find in the novel are only traumatic experiences of the people, British people as representatives. The pains and sufferings of people are inexpressible and in describable. Such a situation in the

history is never imagined by human beings.

Cultural trauma is a threat to culture of people which also affects their identities, individualities and characteristics. It even memorizes people of their past – be it happy or sad. In this sense cultural trauma has its historical power too as:

The historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through it is inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all. And it is this inherent latency of the event that paradoxically explains the peculiar, temporal structure, the belatedness, of historical experience: since the traumatic event is not experience as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place and in another time. If repression, in trauma, is replaced by latency, this is significant in so far as its blankness – the space of consciousness – is paradoxically what precisely preserves the event in its literality. (Caruth 4)

Thus, to be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event. It compels people to remember their painful or blissful past. In this sense, with the help of its historical power, cultural trauma traumatizes people even further more. The traumatic condition, brought about by traumatizing events or situations, culturally interpreted as traumas, is in most general terms an unusual condition, an uncommon state of affairs - some disruption, dislocation, or disturbance, provided that it is experienced or perceived negatively – as painful, harmful, unpleasant, repulsive (Sztompka 458). It is in this light that cultural trauma brings forward traumatic experiences of people. It even memorizes people of their past deeds- both good and bad.

In *The War of the Worlds*, English people also wage a cultural war against Tasmanians and even them to exterminate permanently. Science and technology are

presented as the instruments of tyranny, domination and mass extermination. They are used selfishly to wield power and destroy the enemy. Unable to recognize the equal importance of other weaker creatures for the maintenance and continuation of the ecosystem, human beings like the Martians, abuse and misuse their technology in order to exert threat to other creatures and even to other human beings. "Denouncing the short-sighted timidity of the Martians", the narrator questions the extremity of human beings as well (34). But, in *The War of the Worlds*, these science and technology are misused and abused both by English people and the Martians dominate others and give them torture. The narrator is against this kind of activity and says:

And before we judge of them [the Martians] too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its own inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit? (9).

Human beings are also are not he characters of sympathy. British people attack Tasmania and threaten Tasmanians. They wage "a war of extermination" against their enemies. The cruelty and atrocity of human beings cross their boundary. Their injustice and ill-treatment towards other animals as well as their enemies are inexcusable. Now, it is their turn to suffer because "the fear and empire of man had passed away" (154). The excessive arrogance of human beings proves to be futile and worthless. Now it is their turn to suffer. They now realize their atrocity and cruelty against their enemies. In this sense, we can find cultural trauma experienced by both the British colonized people and the English people.

Traumatic experiences of the people are stored in their collective memory. Collective memory consists of stories about unpleasant time intervals and “prominently includes wars, revolutions, economic depressions, large-scale strikes and riots, and genocide – as well as the legal proceedings often arising from such upheavals” (Osiel 19). The colonial wars they waged are in their mind. At the same time, they have deep-rooted feelings of this present war with the Martians in order to protect their culture and civilization. The so-called transitory and temporary happiness of people can't justified since it awaits a gloomy and nightmarish doom and disaster. Forecasting the general prospects and possibilities of human race, and the universe as a whole, "the novel's thrilling and horrific theme aims to puncture mankind's pretension" (Introduction xiv). When the utopian dreams and aspirations dwindle down, people suffer excruciatingly.

The concept that “the world is technologically driven and its trajectory leads to favourable destinations,” is proved wrong in *The War of the Worlds* (Winner 1000). In the same way, "technological advances are the best way to improve the human condition including permitting greater individual freedom,” can't be found in the novel (Lewis 163). Science and technology in reverse are proved to cause wars and the means of showing the power and authority.

By portraying a scientifically and technologically advanced civilization of the Martians, *The War of the Worlds* aims to show by what steps humanity itself could reach this higher level of maturity. Technological advances help the Martians to change their body mechanism successfully in order to suit with the changing atmosphere of Mars, which is rapidly cooling off, and to raise the Martians above all terrestrial problems against which human beings are still struggling. The Martians have developed a lot due to their science and technology. They not only change their

culture and civilization but also themselves as well – they become successful to modify and developed their internal mechanisms as:

The perfection of mechanical appliances must ultimately supersede limbs; the perfection of chemical devices, digestion; that such organs as hair, external nose, teeth, ears and chin were no longer essential parts of human beings. . . .Micro-organisms, which cause so much diseases and pain on earth, have either never appeared upon Mars or Martians' sanitary science eliminated them years ago. A hundred diseases, all the fevers and contagions of human life, consumption, cancers, tumours and such morbidities, never enter the scheme of their life. (127-28)

The Martians have removed all kinds of diseases. It seems they have removed all kinds of problems from their world. Their body is composed mainly of large brain and "sixteen tentacles, arranged in two bunches of eight each" (125). Diseases and epidemics are alien to their world as the Martians have discovered the cures and remedies of such problems, which remain mystery and enigma to human beings. The Martians are over proud of their culture and civilization and they want to establish it on the earth.

The War of the Worlds reflects some of Wells' social concerns, although it is not as heavily laden with social commentary as *The Time Machine*. The Martians represent colonialists, while the Europeans-traditionally the colonialists themselves-are the primitives confronting invaders who possess a bewilderingly superior technology. Confusion, fear, panic, and bravado are the typical reaction of the English to the invasion. The Martians have "minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts" (45). In this sense, they have extreme hubris of their culture and

civilization.

Cultural trauma is caused when one culture is dominant over culture and wants to control it. When the people of different cultures live together, there is high possibility of cultural clash and conflict. They fight in order to maintain supremacy of their culture. Thus, cultural trauma is a kind of trauma which gives torture to common people as:

. . . cultural trauma is most threatening, because like all cultural phenomena it has the strongest inertia; it persists and lingers considerably longer than other kinds of trauma, sometimes over several generations, preserved in collective memory or hibernating in collective sub-consciousness, and occasionally gaining salience when conducive circumstances arise. (Sztompka 458)

It is the condition in which one culture is naturally taken as superior and vice versa. There is always a kind of conflict and rivalry between these cultures. They try to replace other opponent ones. They don't want to leave any of the palimpsest effects of the other culture. In *The War of the Worlds*, the rival groups are very stubborn for not accepting other's ideas. Jeffrey Alexander distinguishes several components of trauma: the feeling of community members that they have experienced a terrible event; indelible traces of the event left in the group's consciousness; permanent scarring of collective memory by that event; and finally, a fundamental and irreversible change of the collective identity (Alexander 204). The characteristic of trauma presented above emphasizes group consensus and the continued upholding of the definition of the situation as traumatic.

The main cause behind pains and sufferings of the people in *The War of the Worlds* is the war waged by H. G. Wells. The sudden and random attack of the

predatory Martians makes the situation extremely devastating, dehumanizing and distressing. The war takes the life of many people without any reasons. Many of them are mercilessly killed and injured. The war between them is spread everywhere.

As the Martians' advanced civilization has overreached itself and is preparing its own doom and destruction, their science and technology become the graveyard of their own civilization. Destruction and devastation that pervades throughout *The War of the Worlds* demonstrate a nightmare image of the world disintegrated by the scientific and technological developments. After seeing the destruction of Weybridge and Halliford by the Martians' Heat Rays, the narrator says:

. . . several of the houses facing the river were on fire. It was strange to see the place quite tranquil, quite desolate under the hot, blue sky, with the smoke and little threads of flame going straight up into the heat of the afternoon. Never before I had seen houses burning without the accompaniment of an obstructive crowd. A little further on the dry reeds up the bank were smoking and glowing, and a line of fire inland was marching steadily across a late field of hay. (68-69)

There is everywhere death and destruction throughout the text. The graphic description of the death and destruction in England is really heart-rending. There is no limit of the Martians' destruction and devastation. The condition of England, which is supposed to be the strongest and most powerful country, is out of control. "The ammunition blew up, the pine-trees all about the guns flashed into fire, and only one or two of the men who were already running over the crest of the hill escaped" (85). In *The War of the Worlds*, Wells visualizes wide-spreading and all-engulfing war thoughtlessly waged by the Martians which enters every home, doesn't discriminate between the classes, doesn't spare women, children or the clergy and doesn't offer any

quarter. No place within the country - rural and urban as well, is untouched by this violent war. Suffering, pain, agony and torture inflicted by the Martians are increasing day by day. Due to impending danger and disaster, the house loses its traditional symbol of love, affection, protection and warmth as "the house was no place to stay in" (56). When the narrator and the artilleryman are running away from Woking, they see "a group of three charred bodies close together, stuck dead by the Heat-Ray; and here and there were things that people had dropped - a clock, a slipper, a silver spoon, and the like poor valuables" (57). The death and destruction of people and their property show that there is no safe and secure place in England. The Martians see nothing than the destruction of the existing culture and civilization. They want to uproot human beings and their civilization completely.

In this sense, the war presented in *The War of the Worlds* is not an ordinary one – there do or die situation to both human beings and the Martians. Mankind's exposure to this advanced race inevitably leads to conflict between the two cultures and has far-reaching consequences for both individuals and entire societies. So, "the conditions of life have been worsened by technical development" (Williams 203). Intoxicated with their advanced science and technology, they become brutal, tyrant and cruel; and undermine the power of adversary forces, regarding other creatures inferior and weaker to them. The Martians' science and technology, instead of strengthening bilateral relationship with human beings, instigate everlasting enmity and conflict between them. Guided by superiority complex, the Martians abuse and misuse their scientific weaponry in order to wage a war against human beings and to control and dominate them. The ruthless and merciless Martians leave no stone unturned to overthrow human civilization so as to establish their own. Their attitude towards others is suffused with evil intention. The death and destruction can be

further presented as:

It was as if each were suddenly and momentarily turned to fire. . . .An almost noiseless and blinding flash of light, and a man [from the crowd] fell headlong and lay still; and as the unseen shaft of heat passed over them, pine trees burst into fire and every dirty furze-bush became with one dull thud a mass of flames. . . .the flashes of trees and hedges and wooden buildings suddenly set alight. It was sweeping round swiftly and steadily, this flaming death, this invisible, inevitable sword of heat. (26)

There is gloom and dark situation in the novel. The massacre of the Martians is targeted towards total annihilation of human beings. Devoid of any sympathy and consolation, the Martians have extreme antipathy towards all organisms of this world. There is no certitude of life from the dangerous “mysterious death” caused by the Heat-Rays (27). Due to the destruction of the Heat-Rays, “the town [London] becomes a heap of fiery ruins” (54). Similarly, “in one night the valley [Thames] had become a valley of ashes” (55). The sudden and drastic change of England including its capital city, London, “the greatest city in the world,” spreads terror and fear throughout the world (92). The so-called greatest and most developed civilization of the world is in its deathbed.

Imagining the extraterrestrial life of superior races, *The War of the Worlds* exposes the insurmountable gap between human beings and the Martians in terms of intellectual as well as technological superiority. “We men, with our bicycles and road-skates, our Lilienthal soaring-machines, our guns and sticks and so forth, are just in the beginning of the evolution that the Martians have worked out” (129). Due to the extreme development of science and technology, “for countless centuries Mars has

been the stars of wars" (9). It is headed towards unrest, confusion, chaos and disaster. "The immediate pressure of necessity has brightened their intellects, enlarged their powers, and hardened their hearts" and help to develop the "instruments and intelligences such as we have scarcely dreamed of" (2). The ground-breaking scientific inventions like meteorite, canister and different powerful fighting-machines encourage the Martians to come out of their mother-planet and to bring "so much struggle and calamity and death to the earth" (11). The Martians science and technology is fruitless and futile to human beings.

Nobody is left to get pain and suffering. The Martians are so much merciless and unsympathetic that they don't take care of nay persons. The whole country is burning as the great fire surrounds it. As the Martians cause silent and swift death of people; terror, horror and violence strike everywhere. There is no alternative for people except death. Even the escape is impossible due to the strategic destruction of the Martians. The advanced weapons used by the Martians like Heat-Rays and Black Smoke cause untold suffering and pain to people. The awesome power of the Martians' sophisticated weapons leads them to egoism, narcissism, intolerance and indifference towards other species. Moreover, due to the agonizing consequences of the misuse of the weapons, "the village showed not a sign of life" (45). Along with human beings, the whole surrounding undergoes the same confused and dreadful fate. The arrival of the Martians becomes just meretricious, without meaning and value; rather it terrifies and threatens people thereby making the situation more problematic and more ominous. In this sense, *The War of the Worlds* is the excavation of extreme form of traumatic experiences of human beings due to the attack of the Martians.

Evaluating the actual power of the earthly weapons carefully, the Martians introduce even more powerful and destructive weapon – the Black Smoke which

produces “an enormous volume of heavy, inky vapour, cooling and pouring upward . . . the touch of that vapour, the inhaling of its pungent wisps was death to all that breathes” (88). The use of the Black Smoke increases the danger and fear even more than the previous one. The situation falls completely into the clutches of the Martians as nothing can withstand before the superior technological weapons. The overall situation of death, destruction, mass migration and uncertainty hint towards complete fragmentation and collapse of the civilization:

It came to me that I was upon this dark common, helpless, unprotected and alone. Suddenly, like a thing falling and began a stumbling run through the heather. The fear I felt was no rational fear, but a panic terror not only of the Martians but of the dusk and stillness all about me. Such an extraordinary effect in unmanning me it had that I ran weeping silently as a child might do. Once I had turned, I did not dare to look back. (27)

There is everywhere pain and suffering in Britain. People don't have any chance of leaving peaceful and serene life. When the narrator is filled with 'panic terror', he doesn't 'dare to look back'. This is an obvious indication of the excess of fear. Like the narrator, other people as well are 'helpless' and 'unprotected'. With the destruction of the Martians, the narrator's fear and terror increase as he says, "all about me gathered the invisible terrors of the Martians; that pitiless sword of heat seemed whirling to and fro, flourishing overhead before it descended and smote me out of life" (31). The narrator loses his hopes and becomes completely pessimistic as he is frightened with "the immensity of the night and space and nature, [his] own feebleness and anguish and the near approach of the death" (31). The narrator attempts to protect himself and his wife from the clutches of the Martians. His

persistent attempts to save his wife hinds towards the danger and threat posed to human beings by the Martians.

Cultural trauma seeks the disintegration of culture and civilization due to various reasons. It finds out the reasons and possible consequences of cultural clash when two of the cultures meet together and claim themselves as indigenous and original and attempt to establish themselves. Trauma results here from a clash of indigenous with a foreign culture, culturally interpreted as pernicious (Sztompka 454). It is not surprising matter that there is conflict and riot between the two cultures of different origin. Their result may be any – merge of both to establish a new one or one is completely dominant at the cost of other. But there is a kind of synthesis between two different types of cultures and civilizations. When there is cultural war, it touches everywhere and affects all spheres and even changes the way of life of people as:

Traumatizing events or situations may produce dislocations in the routine, accustomed ways of acting or thinking, change the life-world of the people in often dramatic ways, and reshape their patterns of acting and thinking . . . potentially traumatizing events or situations: unemployment, inflation, lowering of living standards and degradation of prestige, poverty, rising crime, a flow of immigrants, and corruption among the political elite. (Sztompka 456)

Due to traumatizing events, the daily routine of the people is also changed. People lose their track of life and are compelled to do as per the demand of the time. There are a lot of consequences of cultural like unemployment, mass migration, scarcity, famine, shortage of daily needs and others. The meaning of ‘trauma’ has become broader – once referring to the psychical experiences of individuals, this term was extended to the collective experience of traumatized communities or – as in the

concept of cultural trauma – beyond the borders of directly affected participants (315). Once trauma was confined within only psychology, but with the development of different theories and trends, it has got entry into cultural and historical aspects. That's why now a days there is not only a trauma but traumas like historical trauma, psychological trauma, national trauma, individual trauma and betrayal trauma. Thus, trauma has become inter-disciplinary theory to discuss about different subject matters and different ideas of people.

In *The War of the Worlds* due to the lack of controlling force, human civilization topples down from its platform. The state mechanism becomes completely unsuccessful. Therefore, London, “the great Mother of Cities” becomes “a city of tramps” (174). Many people are bruised, burnt and scalded. “There is no safety from the Black Smoke but instant flight” (82). Due to the wide-spreading destruction and devastation, “the news that the Martians were now in possession of the whole of London was confirmed” (106). So, the narrator comes to the conclusion that “the country about London must inevitably be the scene of a disastrous struggle before such creatures [the Martians] as these could be destroyed” (56). The plight of people is worsening day by day due to the monopoly destruction of Heat-Rays and Black Smoke. British people can't withstand the advanced and sophisticated weapons.

There is everywhere physical as well psychological fear and terror to the people. They are getting physical pain and suffering while running away towards safe place and at the same time, they are getting psychological pain of losing their relative at any time and even their life. Fear, horror, terror and panic are rampant throughout the text. The excessive despair and distress are found everywhere. Terror, horror and fear are rampant in *The War of the Worlds* due to the violent invasion by the armoured Martians. Due to the destruction and devastation of the Martians, the narrator

becomes "a battleground of fear and curiosity" (24). After watching the narrator "stood petrified and staring" (21). Throughout the text, the major characters and other general people as well are fighting against the death till their last. They leave no stone unturned to avoid catastrophic confrontation with the Martians. The narrator makes endless efforts to save himself and his wife. He even kills the curate in order to avoid the attraction of the Martians. The artillery man runs away ignoring his duty and responsibility assigned to him, when all of the men of his regiment are killed by the Martians.

The narrator's brother is "horrified and perplexed" and runs away from London to save his life thinking London as "a hell" (102). All the surviving people leave their houses along with their belongings in order to save themselves from the impending death. They struggle hard for survival and existence. The arrival of the Martians and their technology harbour untold suffering and pain among the people. The narrator is "in the state of despondent and wretchedness" after seeing the destruction of England (141). He is filled with "indescribable terror" (147). When the advanced and sophisticated weapons are used to kill massive number of people, "the contagion of such a unanimous fear was inevitable" (82). And as a result, "a human agony of terror and physical distress" spread everywhere (104). The situation is as:

There were fear and pain on their [people's] faces, and fear behind them. A tumult up the road, a quarrel for a place in a wagon, sent the whole host of them quickening their pace; even a man so scared and broken that his knees bent under him was galvanized for a moment into renewed activity. The heat and dust had already been at work upon this multitude. Their skins were dry, their lips black and cracked. They were all thirsty, weary and footsore. And amid the various cries one heard disputes, reproaches, groans of weariness and fatigue; the voices of most of them

were hoarse and weak. (99-100)

People are facing terror, horror and fear. They have to feel danger wherever they go because of the presence of the Martians. This very dreadful and deadening situation presented in the chapter named 'The Exodus from London' vividly clarifies the plight and predicament of the people who are rushing away from London. As the people are caught with fatigue and starvation there are quarrel, dispute and conflict among themselves. Instead of unifying and uniting themselves against the Martians, they have less concern with other people.

The War of the Worlds shows a world full of problems and troubles. With the entrance of the Martians' technology, England plunges into barbaric and catastrophic era. It is a new Dark Age, a world of poverty, cruelty, theft, robbery, destruction and devastation. There is no certainty of the life and property of people. The situation shows that the state mechanism is completely absent. The military force is demoralized and paralyzed before the Martians. They can do nothing to tranquilize the worsening situation. The campaign launched against the Martians by the common people is aborted before reaching its ultimate destination due to the involvement of some corrupted and selfish people. The weakness of the government leads towards the institutionalization of crimes, thefts and robberies. Illegal and immoral activities reach their zenith. Along with the scarcity of essential things, price is also skyrocketing. The compulsion and obligation of the people become a golden opportunity for some evil-intended people to hoard money. The illegal and immoral activities are rampant everywhere as:

Steamboats and shipping of all sorts lay there, tempted by the enormous sums of money offered by fugitives, and it is said that many who swam out to these vessels were thrust off with boat-hooks and

drowned . . . the pool became a scene of mad confusion, fighting, and collision, and for sometimes a multitude of boats and Borges jammed in northern arch of the Tower Bridge, and the sailors and lighter men had to fight savagely against the people who swarmed upon them from the river front. (105)

Nothing is in right order and in organized form. Everything is disordered and out of track. The fare of all means of transportation unreasonably hikes beyond the affordability of common people. When the controlling mechanism of the government is collapsed, injustice and cruelty upon the people are exceedingly flourished.

Moreover, criminal activities are conducted in an organized way. Taking advantages of the loopholes of the government, "a body of the inhabitants, calling itself the 'Committee of Public Supply', seized the pony as provisions and would give nothing in exchange for it but the promise of a share in it the next day" (106-7). When George Elphinstone's wife and younger sister are fleeing away from London in pony-chaise, they are attacked by the three robbers. A jeweler's window is broken by the thief (164). The narrator thinks that he is lucky enough to be alive from such catastrophe and sings almost madly - "The Last Man Left Alive! Hurrah! The Last Man Left Alive" (173). The overall situation and the future prognostication are described as:

. . . our views of the human future must be greatly modified by these events. We have learned now that we cannot regard this planet as being fenced in a secure abiding place for Man; we can never anticipate the unseen good or evil that may come upon us suddenly out of space. It may be that in the larger design of the universe this invasion from Mars is not without its ultimate benefits for men; it has robbed us of that serene confidence in the future which is the most fruitful source of

decadence, the gifts to human science it has brought are enormous, and it has done much to promote the conception of the commonweal of mankind. (178-79)

Human beings have got a lot of pains and sufferings. At the cost of millions of people, they have learnt the lesson that they are not completely safe and like the present one in future too there may be the possibility of attack by other creatures. The Martians' invasion forces human beings to reevaluate the profound confidence in their power. It also gives them a lesson to be prepared against the possible forthcoming danger.

Though human beings are aware of "the slow cooling of the sun [that] makes this earth uninhabitable, "they are not completely free from the "abiding sense of doubt and insecurity" (179). Men have to pay a lot to learn the lesson and to think about their future security. "By the toll of a billion deaths man has bought his birthright of the earth" (168). The clash between these two super-powers has no gain to any side. Martians too got nothing except their own extinction. Their science and technology is not useful to them rather it is proved to be counter-productive and self-destructive.

The War of the Worlds is an epitome of cultural trauma in the sense that it meets the criteria of cultural trauma. The cultural warfare between human beings and the Martians brings a lot of conceptual change in human beings. They are not too much confident about their progress and learn the lesson to be prepared in the future to save themselves from the upcoming dangers. Cultural trauma highlights the sense of loss of culture and pains and sufferings of people due to that very cultural loss. It focuses on cultural disorganization, disorder and chaos so that causes and consequences of such situation can be analyzed as:

The conditions for cultural trauma are ripe when there appears some kind of disorganization, displacement, or incoherence in culture – in

other words, when the normative and cognitive context of human life and social actions loses its homogeneity, coherence, and stability, and becomes diversified or even polarized into opposite cultural complexes A defeat in war, a crushed national uprising, the collapse of an empire, persecution of the indigenous religion, delegalization of traditional family forms, disclosure of corruption among the political elite – these are just some examples of such occurrences which may acquire a cultural interpretation that implies the disruption of pre-existent culture. (Sztompka 453-54)

Certain conditions are required for cultural trauma. Homogeneity, coherence and stability are disappeared from the scene. People become selfish. The cultural bond to unite them is shattered and as a result people get only pains, sufferings and tortures.

In *The War of the Worlds*, the Martians successfully run the entire gamut of murder, violence and crime. Before the tenacious and powerful enemy, British military forces can't withstand mainly because of inconsistency and incompatibility within themselves. They do not take any initiatives and steps to tackle the situation. The intimidating and debilitating situation doesn't trigger the duty and responsibility of the authority holders. They try to cover their blunders and felonies by distributing false commitment of providing safety and security. Within the veil of their outward commitment, there lay vested-interests and selfish motives.

Though the narrator, at first, believes "unhesitatingly both in his forecast of human destiny and in the practicability of his astounding scheme", he soon becomes critical and interrogates this grandiose plan because the artilleryman completely turns to a life of drinking and playing cards (158). When the narrator finds "a burrow scarcely ten yards long" which the artilleryman has dug in a whole week, it becomes

"the first inkling of the gulf between his [the artilleryman's] dreams and his powers" (158). Though the artilleryman makes fantastic plan to save "our species upon the edge of extermination or appalling degradation, with no clear prospect before us but the chance of a horrible death", it contributes nothing to solve the problem (161). So the artilleryman's life which is full of vices is severely rejected by the narrator. The so-called utopian vision of underground world is completely subverted to impractical, impossible, dark and gloomy world.

The creation of the fragmentation and disintegration among the people and military forces is another successful strategy of the Martians:

Sunday night was the end of the organized opposition to their movements. After that no body of men would stand against them, so hopeless was the enterprise. Even the crews of the torpedo boats and destroyers that had brought their quick-firers up the Thames refused to stop, mutinied, and went down again. The only offensive operation men ventured upon after that night was the preparation of mines and pitfalls, and even in that their energies were frantic and spasmodic.

(90)

The strategic disorganization of the opposition forces by the Martians leaves human beings only two options - "preparation of mines and pitfalls" in order to hide, and immediate flight. As "the disintegrating organism of government was, with a last expiring effort, rousing the population of London to the necessity of flight", government is completely failed to fulfill any of its commitment (90). The artilleryman's plan of living an underground life starkly pronounces the death of civilization as human beings "degenerate into a sort of big savage rat" (156). A deep hypocrisy underlies in him. Appreciating himself and his plan, he criticizes other

people as "useless and cumbersome and mischievous" since they can do nothing to change the situation as himself and for him such people "ought to be willing to die" (157). He enthusiastically creates a utopian underground life which is a way of "saving our knowledge and adding to it, "for which "we must keep up our science" (157). In his underground utopian world, some 'spies' are appointed and people do not steal anything.

Thus, *The War of the Worlds* is about inter-cultural warfare between human beings and the Martians in which both of the party get nothing. The Martians wage a war against human beings in order to establish their own. But, neither they become successful in their mission nor they can save their life. In this sense, it is the war of defeat not of victory – a war in which no party gets victory. Due to all-engulfing and wide-spreading warfare between the two super powers – the British people and the Martians; pains, sufferings, torture, anguish and distress become the hallmark of *The War of the Worlds*.

III. Cultural War: As a Means of Traumatization not of Libration

After analyzing *The War of the Worlds* from the perspective of cultural trauma, the researcher concludes that the war presented in the book is a kind of cultural warfare waged to maintain and establish their culture and civilization. The British people want to maintain and preserve their so-called advanced and highly developed culture and civilization while the Martians want to uproot human culture and replace with their own. The extreme development of science and technology become the main enemy of human beings as well the Martians. Imagining a traumatic and apocalyptic invasion of the native England by the technologically and mentally superior Martians, he clearly exposes the collapse of human culture and civilization. Due to uncontrolled cultural war between human beings and the Martians, the overall situation of entire England becomes stupendously horrific, terrific, dehumanizing and devastating. People suffer extremely and get unbearable pains, sufferings, distress and grief.

The central story revolves around the traumatic invasion of late Victorian England by the predatory Martians using tripod-fighting machines, equipped with advanced and sophisticated weaponry, against which British military defense proves lame and absurdly inadequate. The abuse and misuse of power provided by scientific and technological inventions to both the English people and the Martians is not beneficial to themselves; rather it is proved counter-productive and self-destructive to them. Due to their excessive power and capacity provided by science and technology, the English people launch their battle against other races including the Tasmanians and even wage “a war of extermination” (9). But their pride and vanity becomes useless and helpless before the advanced and sophisticated weapons of the Martians like spaceship, weaponry, fighting and flying-machines.

The War of the Worlds dramatizes an unmatched warfare between the Martians and human beings in which human beings surrender in front of the powerful Martians. Due to random and sudden attack of the Martians, there is cultural disintegration and disorganization in England. People lose their faith and hopes. The government and even religion can do nothing to improve the situation. People face traumatic experiences and find no centre to be attached with as “trauma can be thought of as a crisis of the self involving a disrupted sense of one’s trust in the life world and a test of moral solidarity with one’s human community” (Wilson 114). People lose everything that are essential for harmonized society.

The narrator makes his endless efforts to eschew the dangerous, tumultuous and calamitous situation and to save himself and his wife from the ruthless attack of the Martians. The arrival of the Martians causes destruction, devastation, massacre, mass migration and extreme suffering of people. Within short period, the whole country turns into the country of ashes and dead bodies. The artilleryman dreams of surviving underground where the men replenish the human race by having sex with plenty of women. His "sob and weep like a little boy, in a perfect passion of emotion" and his grandiose but impractical plans of underground life and dividing London through card game are indicators of cultural decay and degradation (52). The curate is "lethargic [and] unreasonable" (116). Instead of showing his patience and temperance, the curate is "timorous and restless" (119). His habit of taking alcohol instead of being devoted and dedicated to the service of god and church is also nothing more than cultural disintegration.

The War of the Worlds presents horrific, terrific and devastating situation of life of English people due the interplanetary warfare between the Martians and human beings. The control mechanism of the government is completely failed and the failure

of the whole system leads towards the inception of a new "civilization of the massacre of mankind" (104). The Martians intend to cause maximum casualties, terrorizing and leaving humans without any will to resist. Even the military force has no temerity to attempt resistance. So, it is a "grotesque gleam of time no history will ever fully describe" (160). Our civilization is moving towards uncertain complexity. There is only fear, horror and terror in the mind of the people due to their traumatic experiences as "cultural trauma is a scientific concept that takes place when a collective's identity is changed and when memories are imprinted by disastrous event, such as wars (Edkins 113). For Wells, "it [humanity] might have to go through generations of misery and pain, but eventually it would come to its senses and construct the World-State" (Kumar 219). But, it can never be justified. The survival of human beings from this particular catastrophe cannot make them safe and certain because they will have to face the same fate and crisis that the Martians have faced. Thus, cultural warfare between human beings and the Martians is the matter of their prestige; it is of name and fame. Both of them try their best to preserve and establish their own culture and civilization. Despite their persistent attempt, both of them become unsuccessful as all the Martians die due to simple earthly bacteria and human beings could do nothing except losing their property and lives of millions of innocent people. In this sense, *The War of the Worlds* is full of traumatic experiences faced by British people especially about their pains, suffering, agony, anguish and distress.

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