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Subversion of Utopian Vision in H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*

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By

Jagat Bahadur Basnet

University Campus

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Jagat Bahadur Basnet has completed his thesis entitled "Subversion of Utopian Vision in H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2067/09/20 B.S. to 2068/02/08 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

Mr. Shankar Subedi

Supervisor

Date: 2068/02/08

Tribhuvan University**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences****Approval Letter**

This thesis entitled “Subversion of Utopian Vision in H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Jagat Bahadur Basnet has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date:

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I. Utopia and Dystopia: Digging beneath Textual and Contextual Surfaces

This research entitled "Subversion of Utopian Vision in H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*" explores the extremely devastating and dehumanizing situation of life of the native people of England due to all-engulfing invasion by the technologically superior, unsympathetic and remorseless Martians who wreak havoc on the entire scenario and succeed in wiping out the population with their tripod machines, Heat-Rays and poisonous Black Smoke. Presenting future as a canvas for destructive war games, the novel is a seminal depiction of the changing methods of warfare and the possibility of total annihilation and extermination of human beings due to extreme development of science and technology.

The current research tends to prove the hypothesis that the extremely dehumanizing and pathetic situation of life due to the abuse and misuse of advanced and sophisticated scientific weapons by the Martians becomes dystopia as these weapons are used not to bring peace, serenity and improvement in the life of people but to kill them, destroy their property, change religious faith, fragment families, and create alienation and detachment among them.

The existing peace, order, happiness and serenity of England can't remain long-lasting and is disturbed by the sudden and random invasion of the superior technology wielding Martians. Moreover, the hope of people to develop the so-called utopian civilization with the help of the Martians' advanced technology is turned upside- down. The nameless 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 of time, the whole country turns into the country of ashes and dead bodies. The entire scenario becomes horrific, terrific and devastating.

Excavating the apocalyptic and catastrophic consequences of science and technology, this project revolves around mainly five key areas of concern viz. abuse and misuse of scientific and technological inventions, clash between science and religion and the victory of the former, weak state mechanism, alienation and family fragmentation; and devastating and dehumanizing situation of life. To explore the extremely pathetic condition of life, the research has made a deliberate choice to view the text from the perspective of dystopia as a critical apparatus. As the main objective of the research is to show subversion of utopian vision in H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, it has also incorporated the theoretical modality of utopia which, in turn, is undercut and subverted by dystopia asserting that the utopian ideals of perfect life full of happiness, progress and prosperity is not only illusory but also impossible. In such situation, the theoretical modality called dystopia is, perhaps, the best one for the better analysis of the text to pay due and sincere tribute to it. So, it will incorporate utopian and dystopian ideas put forward by various theorists and critics including Arthur O. Lewis, Ingo Cornils, Krishan Kumar, John Huntington, Patrick Parrinder and others.

Born in 1866, H.G. Wells is celebrated as the father of modern science fiction – a combination of imaginative and philosophical ideas, in which the hero undergoes a life-in-death struggle resulting from some unforeseen scientific developments. 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. So, he praised science and technology for their tremendous benefits to human beings and condemned them for the dangers and threats posed to human beings. A prolific writer of novels, short

stories and non-fiction, Wells praised the wonders of science and technology mostly in his non-fiction but also sketched out potential horrors in his science-fiction writings.

In *The Time Machine* (1895), Wells portrays human beings mutating into new species and transcending the boundaries of space, time and the forms of human beings. Envisaging the co-evolutions of humans, science, technology and society; he foresees the possibility of drastically different forms of human life and society. 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.

The Invisible Man (1897) presents human beings shattering the limits of scientific possibility and repeats the Faust-Frankenstein theme in the story of a brilliant but perverted scientist Griffin whose strange and evil experiment succeeds in discovering the secret of invisibility. Such a power of becoming invisible leads him to the paranoid pursuit of total power. The invisible man, Griffin, creates the 'Reign of Terror' among the villages of southern England and involves in immoral and insane acts. His disembodied intellect and unregulated 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* crystallizes Wells' antipathy toward scientific arrogance and its lack of social conscience.

Another scientific romance of Wells, *The First Men in the Moon* tells the story of a journey to the moon undertaken 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 first of Wells' explicitly utopian works *A Modern Utopia* (1905) summarizes and clarifies the utopias of the past and shows his faith in the idea of progress. Wells envisions an ideal and perfect World-State where there is guarantee of employment, shelter, nutrition, health service, provision for old age and absence of anxiety, fear terror and domination from the cradle to the grave. Thus, *A Modern Utopia* is Wells' full-fledged utopia showing ideals of perfect scientific civilization.

As an ardent advocate of utopia, H.G Wells fused rational utopia of Plato and scientific utopia of Bacon. Production of utopia, for Wells, is almost akin to a formula following series of stages. In the first stage, he envisioned a world of discontent, disorder, waste and injustice. In this stage, the world is full of restlessness and anxiety. The second stage is what he called the cleansing disillusionment. In this stage, the cosmic disasters, alien invasions, world wars etc. are caused. According to Wells, the total breakdown is the necessary purgatory for bringing people to their senses. So, for Wells there war is necessary to end war.

The third stage is the period of transition. In this stage, the world prostrated by war suffers from diseases and plagues. There is the reversal of the primitive forms of life. Cities decay and central authority collapses. The final stage is salvation. This is the stage of the reconstruction of the world in which the world recovers economically

and new world arises like the phoenix from the ashes of the old world. The period of reconstruction culminates in the inauguration of the World-State.

Thus, Wells created a utopian place where "he could take wing, and dream of a world free from the crippling constraints of his own childhood and youth" (Kumar 222). The utopian vision of H.G. Wells contradicts itself and turns into anti-utopian or dystopian. His concept of 'war to end war' can't be justified as the 'war' ravages, devastates and demolishes the world instead of ending the war. *The War of the Worlds*, though falls in the second stage of utopia, can't create a utopian world. 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.

The War of the Worlds was published amidst a cultural milieu when the Victorian faith in progress was dwindling down, religious orthodoxy was waning and faith in science and technology was increasing. Upon its publication in 1898, *The War of the Worlds* was received very favourably by both readers and critics thereby enriching and broadening its literary opulence. 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. Denouncing science and technology, *The War of the Worlds* is a jarring irony of high optimism and safe feeling that once pervaded Victorian society. The then concept of science and technology as life-enhancing and peace-making forces is severely castigated.

In his seminal study of literary depiction of future wars, I.F. Clarke describes Wells' *The War of the Worlds* as "the perfect nineteenth-century myth of imaginary

war" (84). By this he means that Wells had combined a number of elements already in the public psyche at the time and had given them expression in a symbolic representation that was immediately understood. These elements or ideas were all based on scientific and technological discoveries. Wells argued that scientific workers are the true modern utopians. For him, man is a cosmic animal, whose purpose is to maintain and extend his biological empire in the face of hostile forces. Moreover, Wells questioned the very utopian ideals supposed to be provided by the development of science and technology as Patrick Parrinder, a great Wells critic asserts:

In *The War of the Worlds*, Wells had created another society facing the consequences of the Law of Entropy – the Martians, grotesque parodies of the ‘Man of the Year Million’ who were forced by the cooling of the planet to search for another home closer to the Sun . . . [and forecasts] man’s only way of escaping inevitable extinction. If this is so, utopian comfort and stability must give way to restless, dissatisfied imaginings. (126)

Inventing an ‘aesthetics of the future’ by writing about science and technology, ethics and morality, the fate of both individual and the human race, love and duty, culture and nature, he establishes the ground-rules for one of the most popular genres of the twentieth century: Science Fiction. The mental evolutions of the Martians “may entail horrific social even physiological, alternations” (Gannon 42). Their science and technology lead them to complete negativity, which is reflected even in their appearance.

Commenting on Wells’ capacity to predict the consequences of European armament, Ingo Cornils epitomizes his ideas as: "In *The War of the Worlds*, Wells picked up on the fashion of novels predicting war in Europe as a result of the

unification and militarization of Germany. However, he gave his tale a new dimension by elevating it onto an interplanetary level" (26). Wells presented anticipatory and futuristic warfare based on advanced technological weapons. Moreover, Wells interrogated human beings' sense of immeasurable superiority and showed the possibility of the development of civilization in other planets. The Martians' advanced weapons, against which British military has no resisting power, are used to wreak destruction and to spread fear and anxiety among the people. Reading *The War of the Worlds*, he further suggests "man would have to abandon his supreme confidence in the future" (36). He hints towards possible danger and annihilation of human beings due to the evolution of the other races.

Charles Gannon points out that *The War of the Worlds* represents the radical extreme of Wells' technological and military inventiveness. He says "although dismissed as pure fantasy in Wells' own time, a modern reader may find his description of the Martians' weapons suffused with urgent implications" (40). Indeed, Wells' inventiveness seems to go beyond imagination. He further extrapolates a terrifying future from contemporary technological and scientific developments (McConnell 24). Wells was convinced that the ability to build and control machines would be the decisive factor in future conflict.

The War of the Worlds is a compendium of many nineteenth century concerns. It is the foundation stone for all alien invasion stories. Commenting on the novel, James Gunn points out: "*The War of the Worlds* differed by making the enemy not simply a foreign power but an alien world. This shifted the argument from the need for a nation's military preparedness to a question of the survival of the human species. It would become the basic theme of all science fictions" (202). Presupposing an interplanetary warfare, Wells suggested to the state mechanism to be prepared for the

possible forthcoming war. As a supporter of Darwinism, Wells strongly advocated the survival of the fittest and indirectly showed his ambivalent attitude to imperialism.

Carl Freedman observes:

Though the text [*The War of the Worlds*] can, indeed, be read as licensing xenophobic fear of the cultural Other as biologically and astronomically alien, its mere powerful tendency is to estrange British colonialism by showing Britain itself in the (then but not later) almost unimaginable position of colonial victim. (53)

Freedman attenuates the ambivalence by consigning it to the subordinate clause and shifting the rhetorical weight to Wells' critique of British colonialism. Thus, he foregrounds the ambivalence of imperialist imagination.

The Martians, with the advanced and sophisticated technology, descend on the earth with a view to create their own utopia. They are supposed to be the harbingers of the utopian ideals. But, instead of creating a utopian society, they abuse and misuse their technology to wreak destruction and havoc on the native England. As Bed Paudyal asserts: "Except for the denouement where the Martians are defeated by the microbes against which they have no resistance, most of what we read in the remaining chapters is more and more of the description of the Martians and the spectacle of their Heat Ray and its destruction" (115). The death and destruction that pervades throughout the text, clearly shows that there is no hope of the improvement of the situation; rather the situation degrades after the arrival of the Martians. The depiction of the warfare between the Martians with their advanced weaponry and British military with their simple and inferior weaponry shows that the native people are not out of fear and anxiety, rather their life is full of misery and danger. Due to all-

engulfing war, the situation of life in *The War of the Worlds* is anti-utopian or dystopian as an English scholar I.F. Clarke claims:

The War of the Worlds is about three kinds of wars. It is about the kind of war Europeans had visited upon less civilized countries during the great imperial expansion in the 1880s and 1890s, with the English now in the role of the backward Tasmanians and other less 'civilized' peoples. It is about the kind of natural biological warfare in which the fittest survive. And it is about the kind of war that might be experienced if science turned its laboratories over to the task of producing the most advanced and destructive weapons. (qtd. in Gunn 202)

Though he talks about three kinds of wars, namely, imperialistic, biological and technological wars, the technological war is dominant. Due to the advanced and destructive weapons produced by science and technology, the world is turned into a modern hell, full of problems and vices. Robert J. Begiebing argues that in *The War of the Worlds* Wells' aim or focus is on total reform of humanity and social order. Wells wants to show the total salvation of humankind. Relating the text with mankind's reform and salvation, he remarks:

The War of the Worlds (1898) then carries forward Wells' program for the total reform of humanity and social order by warning, as his first hero did, of the dangers of becoming overspecialized prisoners of technology, like the Martians, or of becoming prisoners of the decadence born of the naïve yet supreme confidence in the future progress. And from this point onward to the end of his life, in fiction

and non-fiction, Wells will frequently focus on the possible avenues of salvation for the species. (208)

Analyzing his remarks, it is clear that he wants to depict *The War of the Worlds* as a text heading towards utopia. But, scientific and technological development of the Martians enslaves and imprisons them and leads towards their devolution and decadence. So, *The War of the Worlds* is a landmark to interrogate the utopian imagination of perfect and happy life.

Outwardly, *The War of the Worlds* seems to be a utopia but scientific and technological dystopia remains a strong undercurrent of the text as the world presented in the novel is the shadow of utopian world. It is a brutal nightmarish version of utopia. Before the arrival of the Martians, people in England are happy, exuberant and living a calm, peaceful and serene life. The narrator is learning to ride a bicycle; he goes for a walk with his wife in a starlit night (12). Hundreds of people in Ottershaw and Chertsey are sleeping in peace (11). It seems so safe and tranquil (12). But, this situation cannot remain same for a long time. Soon, it is subverted and becomes gloomy, frightful and horrendous.

The narrator is the ardent upholder of scientific and technological utopia. He welcomes the Martians as the harbingers of the new scientific and technological civilization. But the condition of England becomes dangerously unstable and problematic after the arrival of the superior technology-wielding Martians. The traumatic invasion of England by the Martians causes massive destruction, devastation and wreckage. Thus, Wells interrogates the Victorian worship and exaltation of science and technology and shows the inherent contradictions and paradoxes of science and technology. Furthermore, he attempts to dispel anti-utopian

fears of the future by spelling out in detail the false promise of science and technology.

Overcome by the overwhelming sense of awe and fear of the Martians' invasion, the artilleryman dreams of surviving underground where the men replenish the human race by having sex with plenty of women. His grandiose but impractical plans of underground life and dividing London through card game are rejected by the narrator. His vision of utopian life free from fear, danger and problems is proved to be unrealistic and impractical. Though he is military by profession, he is not devoted and dedicated to his duty. All the armies, soldiers and police forces are found irresponsible. First, the British military defense proves lame and absurdly inadequate before the Martians' flying and fighting machines due to which the Martians are able to rampage carnage, destroy the property and cause massive exodus of people fleeing for their lives. Second, there is not co-operation, coordination and sense of dedication among the military. The Martians are not the sole cause of the dystopic life, whole state mechanism is equally responsible for the present plight and predicament of people.

The War of the Worlds brilliantly foregrounds the then waning faith in religion. Due to his belief in science and technology, the narrator vehemently questions the utility of religion in tumultuous situation. The curate advocates for the pious, sacred and peaceful Christian life. He accuses the people of their sins behind the destruction of England. He takes the Martians as the ministers of God (71). Though he is attached to church, he is not religious in his heart, instead full of sins and vices. He is extremely distraught and senseless due to the destruction of the church and Weybridge.

The catastrophic and tumultuous situation ends with the death of the Martians and Red Weed by the earthly bacteria against which they have no resisting power. The initiation of reconstruction and return of people indicate the improvement of the situation. The utopian vision of safe and peaceful life of people after the death of the Martians can't be justified as the country becomes "leaderless, lawless, foodless [and] like sheep without a shepherd" (170). The condition of people becomes even more dangerous and problematic. The initial peace and serene life of people is not restored. The so-called victory of the earth becomes just a meaningless and worthless pyrrhic victory. The overall scenario becomes catastrophic and apocalyptic as Krishan Kumar says after reading the early fantasies of H.G. Wells including *The War of the Worlds*:

The early fantasies are generally characterized by an urgent, apocalyptic sense of doom and disaster, with vengeful Providence punishing humankind for its complacency and hubris. The shadow of an impending terminal catastrophe hangs over everything, whether this takes the sudden form of invading Martians or the more drawn-out form of evolutionary processes and cosmic disasters. (181)

The War of the Worlds is heading towards anti-utopia as a small thread of hope is also not found and the situation is suicidally pessimistic. It is an encyclopedic description of death and destruction. Terror and horror are the bases for the popularity of the novel. After all, what can be more terrifying and horrifying than the prospect of being invaded by irresistibly powerful and uncaring aliens, who look upon humanity as humanity looks upon cattle, as no more than food? So, as Wells biographer Bernard Bergonzi points out, "the dominant note of his early years was rather a kind of fatalistic pessimism combined with intellectual skepticism" (22).

Dystopia is an imaginary, often futuristic society where the condition of life is extremely unbearable, miserable and dehumanizing due to suppression, oppression, destruction, violence, terrorism, poverty and so on. Alternatively called as cacotopia, anti-utopia or counter-utopia; dystopia is an ironical way to display the dark side of utopian construct as:

The anti-utopian temperament supplies the terms of perennial philosophy. It can manifest itself in all ages, in all manners of guises. . . . Its tones are variously satirical, mocking, and minatory – all of which can be effective foils to human pride and vanity. It presents itself as the sum ripe old human wisdom, a storehouse of cautionary but essential truths about human nature and human strivings distilled from the collective experience of mankind. Its principal target is hubris: the insolent pretensions of humanity to mimic the gods.

(Kumar 103)

Dystopia satirizes the utopian ideals of happy and successful life. Excavating the innate hubris of human beings to compare themselves with gods, dystopia destabilizes humanity from the supreme power of nature. It clearly exposes the flaws and weaknesses of the utopian concept. On the other hand, utopia is the imagination of a perfect and better world. It is created in response to man's longing for happiness, prosperity and progress on earth. "It purports to present a more or less detailed picture of a society significantly better than that in which the writer lives" (Elliott 110).

Throwing a clear spotlight on the relation between utopia and dystopia, John Huntington argues:

Though opposites on the surface, utopia and dystopia share a common structure: both are exercises in imaginings coherent wholes, in making

an idea work, either to lure the reader towards an ideal or to drive the reader back from a nightmare. Both are the expression of a synthetic imagination, a comprehension and expression of deep principles of happiness or unhappiness. (Huntington 124)

Though both utopia and dystopia share common structure, they are different – facing towards two opposite sides. Utopia explores happiness, felicity, progress and prosperity and conversely dystopia deals with unhappiness, problems, troubles and sufferings of human life. Thus, dystopia foregrounds the inherent contradictions and paradoxes of utopia as complete utopian life is never possible.

Thus, *The War of the Worlds* is an early science fiction describing an invasion of late Victorian England by the Martians using tripod fighting machines, equipped with advanced and sophisticated weaponry. Due to the ruthless and merciless attack of the Martians, the situation becomes horrific, terrific and devastating. The apocalyptic sense of doom and disaster makes the life of people a living hell. As the utopian hopes and aspirations of people dwindle down, they are compelled to live a cursed and condemned life. To explore such situation, the research depends on the theoretical modality called dystopia. 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 is a thorough analysis of the text including theoretical modality in embedded form. Similarly, the third chapter is the conclusion of the research which briefly summarizes the overall project.

II. Subversion of Utopian Vision in *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. Subverting the utopian ideals of peace, progress, happiness and perfect life; it projects a frightening and terrifying vision of scientifically and technologically advanced civilization. The central story is the invasion of late Victorian England by the technologically superior Martians creating extremely unbearable, miserable, dehumanizing and devastating situation. As a perfect dystopian fiction, *The War of the Worlds* explores the worst possible scenario, highlighting the sense of terror and fear in order to show that a perfect society is not possible. Foregrounding alienation, family fragmentation and disharmony among the people; it satirizes the debased and sinful life of the monasteries from the perspective of the true Christian faith. Moreover, it crystallizes the submission of British military force in front of the Martians' fighting machines.

The War of the Worlds dramatizes the so-called peaceful and happy life of English people in order to excavate the dark side of utopian ideals. The heavenly life of people is believed to be progressed further with the help of the Martians' new technology. So, the Martians are warmly welcomed by the people as the harbingers of new scientific and technological civilization, which is completely euphoric and halcyon. But the hopeful anticipation and speculation of people is reversed as the arrival of the Martians doesn't bring any progress and happiness instead causes untold suffering, destruction and devastation. So, the Victorian worship and deification of science and technology is openly questioned, critiqued and rejected in the novel,

highlighting the abuse and misuses of advanced science and technology which are used only to gain power and control over others.

The traumatic and apocalyptic invasion of these predatory Martians wreaks havoc on the entire England destroying its infrastructures, ruining buildings and killing people mercilessly. The graphic and gripping description of the destruction and death causes a sense of terror, horror, fear and trepidation as "it is still a matter of wonder how the Martians are able to slay men so swiftly and so silently" (28). As the situation becomes completely tumultuous and calamitous, people are compelled to live a hellish life full of uncertainty, chaos and disorder. They do not get any pivotal centre to be attached with. The utopian promise of both religion and state mechanism is found to be anti-utopian. They are proved to be helpless silent observers in a really problematic and difficult situation as they do not provide any solace and relief to people. The faith and belief of people are shattered.

The ultimate overthrow of the Martians by the earthly microbes against which they don't have resisting power instills a little bit hope of the revival of the so-called utopian life but there is still tremendous suspicion among the people that they may be wiped out by a ruthless enemy, just like the primitive races that were wiped out by colonial powers. Furthermore, reconstruction of the buildings and other infrastructures are overshadowed by the wide-spreading lawlessness, leaderlessness, disorder and chaos. Wellsian belief of war as a means to end war ultimately proves to be wrong since the war doesn't bring any peace, happiness, harmony and order. So, speculating mentally and technologically superior races, *The War of Worlds* acknowledges that too much confidence of human beings in the future leads to decadence and danger as humanity's highly-vaunted knowledge proves to be helpless, meaningless and worthless in a overwhelmingly parlous and horrendous situation.

Dystopia dramatizes the worst possible scenario thereby fathoming out the impossibility of ideal and perfect utopian world. Highlighting constant warfare, violence, destruction, repression, rebellion, terror, horror, fear etc; dystopia explores the extremely pessimistic and pathetic condition of life. But, utopia gives a paramount importance to happy and exuberant life. Dismissing the false promise of utopian ideals, dystopian fiction elicits the unending pain and sorrow of human beings.

Krishna Kumar vividly clarifies the difference between utopia and dystopia as:

Utopia and anti-utopia are antithetical yet interdependent. The anti-utopia is formed by utopia and feeds parasitically on it. It depends for its survival on the persistence of utopia. Utopia is original, anti-utopia is copy – only, as it were, always coloured black. It is utopia that provides the positive content to which anti-utopia makes the negative response. Anti-utopia draws its material from utopia and reassembles it in a manner that denies the affirmation of utopia. It is the mirror-image of utopia - but a distorted image, seen in a cracked mirror. (100)

Utopia and anti-utopia i.e. dystopia are not exactly opposite, though they are antithetical and different. Anti-utopia is born out of a sense of frustrated and thwarted utopianism. It is generally recognizable as a distorted reflection of utopia as the utopian promises of happiness and progress are reversed in dystopia. Thomas Mautner defines dystopia as "a fictional account of bad political and social conditions the story is often one of social and political movements or development which promise utopia and inspire hope, but end up as a utopia in reverse" (119). Dystopia is often presented under the guise of false utopia.

Thus, utopia is possible only in imagination and speculation, not in real life situation. It is incompatible with human integrity, individual sanity and decent social

system since no society can be completely flawless and faultless. Consequently, it announces its own death as it entails inherent contradictions and incompatibilities in itself. So, utopian world is ultimately turns into dystopian and becomes “the worm in the bud” or “the serpent coiling itself around the apple tree in the Garden of Eden” (Kumar 101). In a nutshell, dystopia interrogates the practicability and possibility of Edenic happiness, peace, tranquility and serenity in the so-called utopian society.

Utopian speculations and aspirations are oriented towards egalitarian direction and seek for 'organic whole' in the entire social system. Utopian fiction eschews the miseries, sufferings, pains, and other vices and presents a highly-organized and systematic society. "Utopia has traditionally been concerned with happiness and the good life” (Elliott 97). Similarly, "utopia is a healthy society" (117). It exclusively embraces the idea of progress and prosperity ignoring the prevalent absurdities and adversities. Projecting into the future events, utopia optimistically depicts the development of humanity and human civilization as “it is a description of the best society" (Kumar 25). Utopian fiction openly advocates the everlasting happy and satisfied life.

The War of the Worlds allegorizes a utopian world before the arrival of the Martians. Insistence on the need for an integrated world order and development of World-State, which are the very hallmarks of Wellsian utopia, are brilliantly presented in the novel. The native people of England are appreciating the marvels and grandeurs of civilization. They are living their daily life without thinking any danger to them. 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 interior to themselves.

(7)

As the idea of life on other planets is alien to men, they are living a serene and peaceful life. If they anticipate any possibility of the existence of other creatures, they indeed anticipate of interior 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. The narrator enthusiastically narrates:

I went for a walk with my wife. It was starlit, and I explained the Signs of the Zodiac to her, and pointed out Mars, a bright dot of light creeping zenithward, towards which so many telescopes were pointed. It was a warm night. Coming home, a party of excursionists from Chertsey or Isleworth passed us singing and playing music My wife pointed out to me the brightness of the red, green and yellow signal lights hanging in a framework against the sky. It seemed so safe and tranquil. (12)

The philosopher narrator is merry-making with his wife in a starlit night. In company with his wife, he forgets everything except the tranquility and serenity of the night. His wife seems to be replete with happiness and success. Same is the case of other people.

Utopian fiction predominantly concentrates on the upliftment and enrichment of human life. Eliminating conflict, stress, tension and strife; it contemplates on the marvelous and gorgeous frame of the world. It celebrates the accomplishment of good life and assumes "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 utopian fiction. Love and affection play a vital role in the configuration of human society and culture. "Love becomes a utopian theme, a bond that gives substance to the possibility of emancipation and equality, as well as a training ground for the mature individual" (Cornils 35). 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. The overall situation in the utopian fiction is inevitably euphoric and ecstatic.

H. G. Wells concretizes his utopian ideas in *The War of the Worlds* by incorporating the major yardsticks of utopia. Surfaceally, the story is fascinating and captivating, presenting the blissful and delightful life of people in England. Even after the arrival of the Martians, people try to maintain their life as usual. "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). Human civilization is moving ahead smoothly and everything is flowing as usual as the narrator reports:

All over the district people were dining and supping; working men were gardening after the labours of the day, children were being put to bed, young people were wandering through the lanes love-making,

students sat over their books . . . the most part of the daily routine of working, eating, drinking, sleeping, went on as it had done for countless years - as though no planet Mars existed in the sky. Even at Woking station and Horsell and Chobham that was the case . . . everything was proceeding in the most ordinary way . . . the incredible tidings [about the Martians] caused no more disturbance than drunkards might have done. (35-6)

Amid the destruction of the Martians' Heat Rays, people are forcefully living a happy life. The arrival of the Martians doesn't cause any sensation and excitement to the ordinary people as the "extraterrestrial had no meaning" for most of the people (18). Moreover, "the omnibuses, carriages, cyclists, and innumerable people walking in their best clothes, seemed scarcely affected by the strange intelligence that the newsvendors were disseminating" (75). Except some scientists and astronomical authority, others remain disinterested and careless about the life on Mars. Even at Horsell common, near Woking station where the first cylinder has fallen, the daily routine of people is not disturbed. "The milkman came as usual" and a train was running towards Woking (38). There seems to be complete coherence in the life of people, "in the rest of the world, the stream of life still flowed as it had flowed for immemorial years" (37). Despite the challenges and threats posed to men by the Martians, the world is what it ought to be.

Erasing doubt and suspicion among them, people are exchanging co-operation, co-ordination, fellow-feeling and mutual well-being. There is good and intimate relationship among them. The narrator passionately loves his wife. He leaves no stone unturned to save his wife from the ruthless attack of the Martians. Borrowing a dog-cart from the landlord of the Spotted Dog Inn, he takes his wife to Leatherhead. A

gardening neighbour is generous enough to offer a breakfast to the narrator (38). The narrator's brother saves the wife and younger sister of George Elphinstone from the robbers while fleeing from London. People have sense of sacrifice and selflessness. Mishaps, misfortunes and hardships are anathema to them. Despair and distress are beyond human speculation and anticipation.

Expounding a vision of a Golden Age of happiness and peace, Wells intends to paint a clear picture of the grand utopian state. But his messianic ambition of creating a utopian world in *The War of the Worlds* becomes unfortunately handicapped and paralyzed as the apocalyptic fears and pessimistic forebodings reverberate throughout the text. The so-called and forcefully imposed utopian life of people in England before the arrival of the Martians withers in its bud and becomes upside-down. The transitory and temporary happiness of people can't justifiably be said as utopian 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.

Science and technology are generally taken as the vehicle of progress and success. They are highly eulogized as the soul and spirit of utopian fiction. Considered as the supreme source of knowledge and defining elements of utopian civilization, they substitute Plato's justice, temperance and courage, and Christian ideals of grace and redemption. Utopia believes that "the world is technologically driven but its trajectory leads to favourable destinations" (Winner 1000). In a way, they are supposed to lead a barbarous humanity into the Promised Land.

"Technological advances are the best way to improve the human condition including

permitting greater individual freedom” (Lewis 163). Focusing on scientific optimism and technological determinism, utopian fiction praises science and technology as the panacea of all human problems as "scientific materialism and utilitarianism are the hallmarks of modern utopia" (Kumar 180). Utopian fiction exclusively foregrounds pleasure, happiness and general welfare of people, where science and technology become the pivotal point around which everything revolves. Due to its all-influencing power, "modern science and modern utopia had become virtually synonymous" (45). In utopia, strengths and marvels of science and technology are highlighted as "the shortest route to utopia lies in technological improvement" (Lewis 163). The fundamental and underlying assumption of science and technology is the creation and maintenance of utopia.

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 not only help the Martians to develop utopian life in their mother planet Mars, but also 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 as the narrator notes:

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)

Buttressed with their science and technology, the Martians are far-ahead in evolution and civilization. Their body is composed mainly of large brain and "sixteen tentacles, arranged in two bunches of eight each" (125). They achieve grand success to remove all unnecessary parts of their body which are still burden to human beings and strengthen their mental and physical power thereby developing superhuman qualities. Diseases and epidemics are alien to their world as the Martians have discovered the cures and remedies of such problems, which remain still mystery and enigma to human beings. The development of scientific appliances along with sanitary science blesses the Martians with a long and healthy life which is completely free from all earthly problems.

Exploiting the miracle of science and technology, the Martians have elevated themselves from the ordinary level in many respects. They are able to get rid from "the complex apparatus of digestion" and instead of eating food they take "the fresh, living blood of other creature, and *injected* it into their own veins" (125). They transcend themselves above the tremendous waste of time and energy for eating and digesting. "The digestive processes and their reaction upon the nervous system sap our strength and colour our mind. . . .But the Martians were lifted above all these organic fluctuations of mood and emotion" (126). Unlike human beings, the Martians remain unaffected by body processes and temperament and consequently they supersede human beings in their mental and physical capabilities. Moreover, "the changes of temperature" and "pressure do not seem to have affected their health at all seriously" (129). Environmental changes have less to do with the Martians' internal body mechanism. As the Martians are "absolutely without sex", their reproductive

process is also indisputably peculiar (126). The young Martian is budded off without causing delivery pang to the adult one. Due to this easy process, the population of the Martians could be increased uncontrollably. Anticipating the possible development of human civilization, men on earth are "ready to welcome a missionary enterprise" of the Martians (7). Human beings, therefore, want to revolutionize their civilization intertwining with that of the Martians'.

The serious and careful explication of *The War of the Worlds* blatantly subverts the very utopian mission of the Martians on earth. The technological superiority of the Martians, through helps to solve their temporary problems, ultimately proves to be self-destructive and counter-productive to them. The complete eradication of the diseases in Mars makes them over confident and hypocritical of their sanitary science. But, beyond their imagination, their much-praised sanitary science becomes pathetically useless and inefficient on earth as it doesn't protect them from the simple earthly bacteria, and as a consequence, they are swept out of existence. The change in the method of taking food, through saves their time and energy further problematizes their life by increasing the struggle for existence. The extreme development of science and technology unfortunately hastens their disappearance on the one hand and disillusions the optimistic aspirations of the people on earth on the other.

Severely castigating human beings' passionate longing for technological advancement in *The War of the Worlds*, Wells envisions as exciting and thought-provoking story of alien invasion thereby exploring what happens when men who think of themselves as lord of creation are suddenly confronted with a race that is far more advanced in its technology and science. 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). Although the primary aim of the Martians is, perhaps, to create a utopian civilization on earth as well, it is badly interrupted and inverted due to their uncompromising, boastful and hypocritical temperament. 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. This is clear from the narrator's remark:

Yet across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us . . . And we men, the creatures who inhabit this earth, must be to them at least as alien and lowly as are the monkeys and lemurs to use . . . [and] this world is crowded only with what they regard as inferior animals. (7-9)

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. So, *The War of the Worlds* like other dystopian fictions deploys “forces which are beyond human control limiting and annulling all human achievements” (Williams 204). The persistent attempts of the Martians to initiate the new civilization of science and technology on earth by uprooting the existing one, can't be considered as utopian; rather it is anti-utopian as it satirizes utopian vision itself.

Technological excess ultimately results in destruction, dehumanization, devastation, calamity and disaster. Instead of providing utopian ideals of happiness and felicity to human beings, technological advances rather confisticate them. So, science and technology don't move our civilization forward, but indirectly pull it backward to more barbarous condition as:

. . . it was the grotesque to see reason and science as the great deliverers of humanity. If reason and science provided any guide to the future, it was in the nightmare [and brutal] form of their perverted use. The urge to look in to the future remained. That was the complement that anti-utopia paid to utopia. But, it was now a future to be feared.
(Kumar 225)

Our future full of scientific and technological inventions will not be safe and tranquil but it will be of grotesque, nightmarish and dangerous because these inventions will be abused and misused by the power holders. So, “the writers who envisage ideal societies have therefore had to consider the expanding role of technology in human life “(Lewis 163). The ever increasing use of technology not only enslaves human beings but also displaces them from the sovereign and supreme power of nature. In place of empowering and strengthening human beings, technology turns against themselves and causes their degeneration and even disappearance because "technology is predatory and threatening" (Huntington 137). Technological imperative becomes suicidal and self-destructive. As "the gases of the firing caused the Martians inconvenience", the scientific and technological experiment becomes harmful to themselves (11).

The War of the Worlds sharply destabilizes the then well established concept of men as the master of all creatures. The narrator is replete with “a sense of

dethronement, a persuasion that I was no longer a master, but an animal among the animals, under the Martian heel” (144). The privileged position of men as the centre of creation is toppled down from its pedestal due to the invasion of powerful alien species from Mars. The very opening lines of the novel are very striking to clarify this stark reality:

No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century, that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own that as men busied themselves about their various concern they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. (7)

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). The Martians’ telescope and magnifying machines are meticulously used to observe the activities of human beings on earth with the evil intention of interfering them. 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 superior technology of the Martians though helps to solve their immediate problems of Mars, which is in its final stage of exhaustion, brings even more dangerous and hazardous consequences.

In *The War of the Worlds*, 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 completely. 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). He further critiques:

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)

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. Moreover, giving a didactic lesson of 'tit for tat' for human beings, Wells intends to clarify the

helplessness of their technological hubris in front of the Martians' advanced technology thereby excavating the dark aspects of science and technology.

As a strong advocate of science and technology, the narrator believes that the advanced and sophisticated technology of the Martians will revolutionize human life for eradicating the existing problems because for him, "the scientific utopia aims to show how human life could become easier, healthier, [and] happier. Technological inventions, eulogized by Bacon as 'new creations and imitations of divine works' are to be signal means to this end" (Kumar 31). The assurances and promises of science and technology are uncountable and due to their development, "the new is better than the old, the future more perfect than the past, because history is the record of the growth and progressive fulfillment of humanity" (43). Science and technology are taken as the foundation stones of modern civilization as it is falsely thought that there is "no barrier to human growth: humanity could re-fashion the whole universe and becomes joint-creature with the creator himself" (47). In *The War of the Worlds*, the philosopher narrator, the astronomer Ogilvy, the journalist Henderson and the astronomer Royal Stent are enthusiastically optimistic in scientific and technological advancement.

Speculating the events that will take place in the early twentieth century and making use of the technological inventions more advanced than the contemporary one, *The War of the Worlds* depicts the present scientific and technological world on problematic future. The so-called scientific and technological civilization of the twentieth century is founded on the weak ground, which can be broken down easily when faced with the problems and troubles as:

. . . the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century and the industrial revolution of the nineteenth – have been the building blocks

of the sterile graveyard of the twentieth-century civilization. Science and Reason, the twin components of practically all progressive and utopian conceptions since the seventeenth century, are clearly in the ascendant. But, instead of producing the heaven on earth that the utopians confidently predicted, they have succeeded only in creating a hell. (Kumar 243)

Utopian promises of science and reason are completely shattered. Due to the evil and murderous impulses embodied in the Martians, their superior science and technology are neither useful to themselves nor to human beings. 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)

The graphic description of the death and destruction in England is really hear-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 narrator further describes the destruction as:

The towers of the Oriental Collage and the pine trees about it had gone, and very far away, lit by a vivid red glare, the common about the sand-pits was visible. Across the light, huge black shapes, grotesque and strange, moved busily to and fro. It seemed indeed as if the whole country in that direction was on fire - a broad hillside set with minute tongues of flame, swaying and writhing with the guts of the dying storm, and throwing a red reflection upon the cloud-scud above. Every now and then a haze of smoke from some nearer conflagration drove across. . . . (50)

The whole country is burning as the great conflagration surrounds it. As the Martians cause silent and swift death of people; terror, horror and violence strike everywhere. There is no alternative choice for people except death. Even the escape is impossible due to the strategic destruction of the Martians.

Critiquing the inherent incompatibility between scientific and technological progress and universal happiness, *The War of the Worlds* rings the death-knell throughout the text as the ethics and morality get no place in Martians' invasion. It is a bitter satire on modern people who unquestionably believe in the comforts and benefits given by science and technology ultimately losing their individual potentialities and capabilities. Moreover it clearly fathoms out that the abuse and misuse of science and technology can imperil and question the very existence and survival of human beings. Expounding a vision of technologically and intellectually superior Martians who are short-sighted, selfish, cruel and intolerant, *The War of the Worlds*, presents a deadly destructive war in which there is no possibility of truce, peace arguments and even communication. The attempts of complete annihilation and extermination of the opponents by the Martians makes the overall atmosphere gloomy and eerie.

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 excruciating and corroding 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 tumultuous and calamitous fate. "The nearer houses still stood intact, awaiting their fate, shadowy, faint and pallid in the steam, with the fire behind them going to and fro" (65). The culmination

of the disheartening situation due to anxiety, fear, obstacles and annoyances of the Martians justifies that the heart of *The War of the Worlds* is undoubtedly dystopian. 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. "The Martians and their appliances were altogether invisible" (27). The composition and functioning of the weapons that the Martians used to create havoc are completely incomprehensible to the scientists. The Heat-Ray is "heat and invisible, instead of visible light. Whatever is combustible flashes into flame at its touch, lead runs like water, it softens iron, cracks and melts glass and when it falls upon water incontinently that explodes into steam" (28). The power of the Heat-Ray is such that it burns anything within its range.

The vision of the gigantic tripods striding across the countryside, leveling everything in their paths with their Heat-Rays and killing with their Black Smoke, still has the power to stir our terrified imaginations. The more interesting thing is that *The War of the Worlds* was written appropriately twenty years before the first one of poisonous gas in warfare is used, and today's scientists still are working on the use of lasers as weapons. The tripod-machines cause death and destructions as:

A monstrous tripod, higher than many houses, striding over the young pine-trees, and smashing them aside in its career; a walking engine of glittering metal, striding now across the heather; articulate ropes of steel dangling from it, and the clattering tumult of its passage mingling with the riot of the thunder. A flash and it came out vividly, heeling over one way with two feet in the air, to vanish and reappear almost instantly as it seemed, with the next flash, a hundred yards nearer. Can you imagine a milking-stool tilted and bowled violently along the

ground? That was the impression those instant flashes gave. But instead of a milking-stool imagine it a great body of machine on a tripod stand. (46)

The Martians are able to generate an intense heat in a chamber and project it parallel against any object they choose by means of “a polished parabolic mirror” (28). The destruction and devastation wreaked by the Martians’ Heat-Rays are inexpressible as “the beam [of the Heat-Rays] swung close over their [of the crowd] heads, lighting the tops of the beech -trees that line the road and splitting the bricks, smashing the windows, firing the window-frames and bringing down in crumbling ruin a portion of the gable of the houses nearest the corner” (29). The curious but “panic-stricken crowd” have no idea to do away with the prevalent confusion and catastrophe (30). They try to escape from Woking station “as blindly as a flock of sheep” but unfortunately “three persons at least, two women and little boy, were crushed and trampled there and left to die amid the terror and the darkness” (30). There is no solution to the present impasse as it exerts a complete grip over the situation.

The War of the Worlds penetrates deep into the gloomiest and darkest situation of life in order to expose the death and destruction within the so-called peaceful life of British people. Everyday death toll increases by leaps and bounds due to the flashes of flame generated by the Martians’ Heat-Rays:

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)

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). The narrator becomes “motionless, dumbfounded and dazzled by the flashes of light” (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 then Victorian feeling of peace and safety is completely ruptured. In this sense, *The War of the Worlds* is predominantly dystopian fiction because “utopian fiction assumes static condition and doesn’t accept dynamism (Kumar 48). People in utopia believe that their life is perfect and devoid of problems. They do not want any change. The swift change leads towards negative direction.

To intensify the gravity of the present tumultuous and calamitous upheavals, the Martians change the choice of their weapons. 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:

All the railway lines north of the Thames and the South-Eastern people at Cannon Street had been warned by midnight on Sunday, and trains were being filled. 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 policeman who had been sent to direct the traffic, exhausted and infuriated, were breaking the heads of the people they were called out to protect. (92)

Due to the lack of controlling force, human civilization topples down from its pedestal. The state mechanism becomes completely unsuccessful. So, 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. The overall situation of England is exactly what happens in “The Second Coming” by W.B. Yeats included in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*:

Things fall apart; the centre can't hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst
 Are full of passionate intensity. (313)

Due to the failure of 'the centre' i.e. the state mechanism, the religion, and science and technology to pacify and normalize the deadening situation; 'anarchy' and tyranny spread everywhere. As the superior technology holding Martians lose their ethics and morality, there are blood-shed, destruction, devastation and other criminal activities throughout England. The innocent people are compelled to succumb before the Martians as the centre is decentered and dethroned.

Uncovering the dichotomy between what science and technology promise and what they deliver, *The War of the Worlds* underlines the failure of utopian ideals because, "instead of producing the heaven on earth that the utopians confidently predicted, they have succeeded only in creating a hell" (Kumar 243). The explicit pronouncements of utopia of creating an exuberant life become just a bubble on water. Technological abundance doesn't lead towards utopian life; therefore in anti-utopia there is "the rejection of much of technological civilization" (128). The over-dependency on science and technology merely enslaves and entraps human beings. Instead of uplifting the existing civilization, "the technological imperative is so ubiquitous and apparently brings with it so many seemingly inevitable and undesirable consequences" (Sibley 272). Fear, horror, terror and panic are rampant throughout the text in dystopian fiction because by negating the promise of utopian ideals it leads towards "preparing a modern hell," a world empty of all meaning and purpose (Kumar 110). The excessive despair and distress profoundly vibrate in dystopian fiction.

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). The spectacle of the Martians fills the narrator with the terror and horror. Here is the narrator's report about his reaction including the reaction of others public after observing the unfolding of the cylinder and appearance of the Martians:

A sudden chill came over me. There was a loud shriek from a woman behind. I half turned, keeping my eyes fixed upon the cylinder still, from which other tentacles were now projecting, and began pushing my way back from the edge of the pit. I saw astonishment giving place to horror on the faces of the people about me. I heard inarticulate exclamations on all sides. . . .I looked again at the cylinder and ungovernable terror gripped me. I stood petrified and staring. (21)

The phrase "astonishment giving place to horror on the faces of the people" clearly shows the eerie situation after the arrival of the Martians. The narrator is caught between fear and fascination due to the appearance of the Martians and "stands petrified and staring". His hopes and aspirations are unfortunately converted into fear and terror. When the narrator hears "the crackle of fire" everywhere and observes the death of many people at a time by the Martians' Heat-Ray, he is filled with "a terrible astonishment" and remains frightened and terrified (26). He expresses his fear as:

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)

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). In his extreme pessimism, the narrator sadly says, "I expected nothing but death" (66). 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. They are afraid of death, which is exactly opposite in utopian fiction, in which death is taken simply as a transformation from one life to another. This can be found in Hesiod's *The Works and Days* as:

They [people] lived as if they were gods,
Their hearts free from all sorrows,

By themselves and without hard work or pain;
 No miserable
 Old age come their way; their hands, their feet,
 Did not alter.
 They took their pleasure in festivals,
 And lived without troubles.
 When they died, it was as if they fell asleep.
 All goods were theirs. (qtd. in Elliott 4)

Utopian fiction celebrates happiness, pleasure and felicity as the pain, sorrow, suffering and despair do not get entrance into it. Apparently *The War of the Worlds* seems to be utopia at the beginning, as there are no fear, terror and horror. When the calm and peaceful England is mercilessly attacked by the Martians, this so-called earthly paradise becomes a mere delusion. 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). So, "utopia lies at the far end of dystopia" (Williams 211). The camouflaged utopian life of England is swept away and becomes upside-down as the imaginative happiness and pleasure of people are destroyed by the Martians.

To increase the intensity of the sense of fear and danger, Wells incorporates two different-yet-identical narrative points of view. Darko Suvin writes, "the novel's composition is marked by the clumsy system of two eye-witness narrators, improvised

in order to reconcile the sensational immediacy and the necessary overview” (28). These two eye-witness narrators provide the epic-scale panorama of death and destruction of both rural and urban areas. The narrator’s brother hears the newspaper hawkers shouting “Dreadful; Catastrophe! . . . Fighting at Weybridge! Full Description! Repulse of the Martians! London in danger!” (77). It arouses a sense of danger and fear. He also hears the cry of “a little girl of eight or nine, all alone,” “I can’t go on! I can’t go on!” and, in this case, the narrator reports, “my brother woke from his torpor of astonishment” (100). In these instances, the danger is imminent and terror is highlighted.

In *The War of the Worlds*, Wells sprinkles an anti-utopian awareness, thereby subverting all forms of utopian ideals. Although he is "the leading apostle of science, and yet his apocalyptic visions of the disasters science may bring were the source of the dystopian and anti-utopian of the twentieth century" (Kumar 168). This sense of apocalyptic vision is brilliantly foregrounded in the present novel. Catastrophe, death, destruction and disaster are highlighted in the dystopian fiction in order to arouse a sense of fear and terror. The utopian ideals are actually beyond human capacity. So, questioning the utopian promise of shallow happiness, it asserts that the imaginative and transitory happiness is worthless and meaningless. This is what Wordsworth expresses in his famous poetic lines:

Not in Utopia - subterranean fields -
 Or in some Secret Island, Heaven knows where!
 But in the very world, which is the world
 Of all of us - the place where in the end
 We find our happiness, or not all all! (qtd in Williams 211)

Vehemently castigating the utopian ideals, *The War of the Worlds* presents the shifting paradigm of happiness. Happiness which melts with the simple touch of adversity and catastrophe can't be true happiness; rather it should accompany men in all situations and seasons. Wells seems to appeal to confront all disasters and calamities in this world in order to obtain the ecstatic feeling of happiness. Moreover, he urges not to lose senses in adversity and not to be proud in prosperity. As a result of extreme enthusiasm of their scientific and technological exultance, both the British people and the Martians become over-confident of their safety and security; and consequently, meet this catastrophic confrontation.

Curtailing the charismatic influences of science and technology, "the investigation of the freedom – happiness dichotomy characteristics anti-utopia" and "in anti-utopian form all positives turn upside-down" (Huntington 140). In most of the dystopian fictions, like in *The War of the Worlds* neither freedom nor happiness is found. Both freedom and happiness of British people are kidnapped by the Martians. Unlike "the utopian story [that] imagines a better and a happier world and makes no pretence to reality", the dystopian story is concerned with warning and forebodings (Parrinder 115). Due to the misuse of the Martians' superior mind, kissed with the advanced and sophisticated weapons and lack of counter-balancing power in England, there is danger, threat, fear and trouble everywhere. As the peace, serenity and safety of people are lost; they are compelled to live a frightened, terrified and petrified life 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 there 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)

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. Though technology assumes that "the improvement of manners and of social relations is firmly based on it alone", in *War of the Worlds* opposite is the case (Williams 207). The Martians' policy of creating fragmentation and division among the people is somehow apparent. Horror, terror and fear are further intensified by the very description of the Martians. Unlike any terrestrial creature, the Martians are, "[a] big grayish rounded bulk, the size, perhaps, of a bear" and "[the] whole creature heaved and pulsated convulsively" causing "the strange horror of its appearance" (21). Moreover, the Martians have "the incessant quivering of [the] mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles, the tumultuous breathing of the lungs in a strange atmosphere" that makes the narrator "overcome with disgust and dread" (22). Due to "the extraordinary intensity of the immense eyes" which are "vital, intense, inhuman, crippled and monstrous", the narrator is filled with "half-fascinated terror" (22). They are "strange, swift and terrible creatures" (62). They are described as "vast spider-like machines, nearly a hundred feet high a capable of the speed of an express train, and able to shoot out a beam of intense heat" (77). The obscure description of the Martians

makes the news about the Martians more sensational and adds terror among the people.

The very appearance of these unearthly creatures spreads terror and horror among the people. There is completely symmetry between their dreadful appearance and the death and destruction they wreak. From the cylinder "everyone expected to see a man emerge – possibly something a little unlike us terrestrial man, but in all essential a man" (21). The expectation of the people is shattered as the Martians are found to have simple bodily form but very dreadful and dangerous. Moreover, they "were not merely a handful of small sluggish creatures, but that they were minds swaying vast mechanical bodies; and that they could move swiftly and smite with such power that even the mightiest guns could not stand against them" (77). The maxims and other field-guns of England are proved to be futile and useless against the Martians' powerful armours.

'The news from the Mars' profoundly excited the scientists, writers, journalists and the general public at the end of the nineteenth century, as Mark R. Hillegas puts, "the 1890s were the peak of. . . the great Mars boom, when public imbecility and journalistic enterprise combined to flood the papers and society with 'the news from Mars' (154). Some of the science fiction writers entertained people by developing much more daring, romantic and even apocalyptic notions about the planet. Due to the wide spreading influence of Giovanni Schiaparelli's discovery of the lines on the Mars' surface in 1877 and Percival Lowell's conclusion in 1895 that these lines were canals cut by the intelligent Martians, these writers imagined the stories about mankind's encounter with the Martians and its catastrophic consequences. The possibility of life on Mars mainly stirred two writers – one English, H. G. Wells and the other German, Kurd LaBwitz - to explore what would be

like if the Martians were to land on Earth. Both of these writes envisioned the similar but slightly different concept of the Martians as:

In contrast to Wells' repulsive, malevolent monsters, though, LaBwitz's Martians are humanoids who come to Earth as benevolent culture-bearers. Their home world is presented as a technological and social utopia with a truly democratic decision-making process and an evolved sense of personal freedom and public responsibility . . . Mankind's exposure to this advanced race inevitably leads to conflict between the two cultures and has far-reaching effects on both individuals and entire societies. (Cornils 25)

Although there is parallelism between the stories of the Martians in *The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells and in *Auf zwei Planeten* (two planets) by Kurd LaBwitz, these two writers were not influenced by each other. The same year of publication, i.e. 1898 is a matter of only co-incidence. Both of them are respected for the authenticity and originality of their stories as “the two writers were unaware of each other . . . there was no influences, direct or otherwise, of one story upon the other” (Hillegas 160) Unlike Wells' intolerant, uncompromising and extremist Martians, LaBwitz imaged sympathetic, co-operating and liberal Martians. But, surprisingly both of them presented the Martians as technologically superior races to human beings. Moreover, they focused on the opposition between human and non-human, science and nature (Rose 38). They also introduced the icons of new genre [science fiction] including the spaceship, ruined land-escape, and monsters (Wolfe 225-27). The interplanetary warfare is thus, incorporated in the field of science fiction.

Presenting the mentally and technologically superior Martians, *The War of the Worlds* explicitly thematizes the concept of *corruption optimi pessima*, that is, the

corruption of the best becomes the worst. In the context of the present novel, the destruction, devastation, suppression and oppression of the Martians are incomparably premium. Same sentiment is expressed by Shakespeare in his poetic lines as, “Sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds / Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds” (qtd in Elliott I). The destruction and devastation of the Martians cross the ordinary level. The ultimate consequences of the extreme superiority of the Martians, filled with evil intentions, are inexpressible. They not only challenge the human civilization but also threaten the very existence and survival of human beings. When the strategic war of the Martians is targeted towards total extermination and annihilation of human beings, the organized force of the latter proves to be futile, useless and ineffective. There is not any possibility of confrontation but constant flight is an only option to be safe.

Utopia is a place of abundance, which fulfills the basic and fundamental necessities of people. If there is no scarcity and shortage, there is no question of conflict, stress and tension because utopia "systematically attempts to eliminate social conflict, accident, tragedy" (Elliott 104). People in utopian society don't want to lose their grip from their so-called achievements of perfection and world of sufficiency. Utopian world is static because "change is, almost by definition, not only unnecessary but a distinct threat. It can only signal degeneration and decay of the good society" (Kumar 48). In sharp contrast to utopian world, dystopian world is dynamic. It is conflict and tension-ridden world, which is full of shortage and scarcity. So, "the search for earthly perfection [is] not just blasphemous but illusory" (100). Furthermore, due to problems, troubles and evils of the world, in dystopia, "human character can hardly be said to exist at all" (Elliott 120). Life becomes problematic and troublesome. When the situation is pessimistically depressing and out of control,

people do not want to live there, instead they search for safe world. So, migration becomes inevitable in dystopian fiction.

The War of the Worlds demonstrates 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 extreme scarcity and shortage of even the most essential things as:

. . . the scattered multitudes began to realize the urgent need of provisions. As they grew hungry the right of property ceased to be regarded. Farmers were out to defend their cattle-sheds, granaries and ripening roots crops with arms in their hands. A number of people now, like my brother, had their faces eastward, and there were some desperate souls even going back towards London to get food. . . . There was also a placard in Chipping Ongar announcing that large stores of flour were available in the northern towns and that within twenty- four hours bread would be distributed among the starving people in the neighbourhood. (106)

There is no certainty of the life and property of people. All their inalienable and fundamental rights are seized. The situation shows that the state mechanism is completely absent. If it does any preparation, it becomes deplorably inadequate. The military force is demoralized and paralyzed before the Martians. They can do nothing to tranquilize the worsening situation. Contemptuously dismissing the ability of government, *The War of the Worlds* shows the tarnish image of England due to its eunuch government. 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 narrator's brother and George Elphinstone's wife and younger sister get food "at exorbitant prices, and the three of them contrived to eat a meal" (108). The compulsion and obligation of the people become a golden opportunity for some evil-intended people to hoard money 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 Barges 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)

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).

Due to extreme hunger and starvation, the narrator even thinks to kill a dog for food (142). He ransacks everywhere to find food and satisfy his hunger. The following report of the narrator indicates his desperate search for food:

I hunted for food among the trees, findings nothing. . . .I encountered a couple of hungry-looking dogs, but both hurried circuitously away from the advances I made them. Near Roehampton I had seen two human skeletons - not bodies, but skeletons, picked clean - and in the wood by me I found the crushed and scattered bones of several cats and rabbits and the skull of sheep. But though I gnawed parts of these in my mouth, there was nothing to be got from them. (146)

This shows the culmination of the scarcity and shortage of the essential things. The narrator is compelled to eat even the bones of cats and rabbits. Same is the case of other people. The overall state mechanism neither mitigates nor solves the burning and burgeoning problems of England. The narrator is between starvation and death. In the kitchen of a deserted house, he "ransacked every room for food" and finds "a rat-gnawed crust," "some biscuits and sandwiches that had been overlooked" but he can't eat them as they are too rotten (148). The expression of the artilleryman further clarifies this scarcity; "there is no food about here. . . .This is my country. All this hill down to the river, and back to Clapham, and up to the edge of the common. There is only food for one (151). Here the artilleryman becomes too much selfish and doesn't concern about other people. People can't get even water at the time of death. The conversation between one of the men carrying the chief Justice on a white stretcher and narrator's brother crystallizes this as:

‘Where is there any water?’ he said. He is dying fast, and very thirsty.

It is Lord Garrick’.

'Lord Garrick!' said my brother - 'the chief Justice?'

'The water?' he said.

'There may be a tap,' said my brother, 'in some of the houses. We have no water. I dare not leave my people. (101)

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 unfavourable place to live due to the tumultuous 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 is further described 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)

People are leaving 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). People are fleeing in cabs, carriages, shop-carts, wagons and so on. The people in vehicles are very much merciless and careless about the trekkers. 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 narrator elaborates the massive exodus of people as:

. . . .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).

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.

Utopia presents a world full of happiness, felicity prosperity and progress. It assumes that, "the best society would be the society ruled by the best, those most fitted by training and temperament for the most difficult of all arts, the arts of government" (Kumar 5). The government should be public friendly and it should address the pain and suffering of people because utopian vision is "more truly a vision of a world where unnecessary bodily and mental sufferings have been eliminated and where individuals are allowed to grow to their full human stature in mind and body" (208). In utopian society individuals can easily develop their personality, capability and good relationship among themselves. So, "all restraints are undesirable" in such society (15). There is complete freedom for people. Moreover, people can control their own destiny (Hough 124). In sharp contrast to utopia, anti-utopia attempts "to paint the most negative, the blackest, picture possible of the present and the future to come"(Kumar 125). Utopian hopes and aspirations are mercilessly subverted in dystopia as:

The power and imagery of utopia have always been the driving force and indispensable material of anti-utopia. Take away utopia's power to inspire hope with its vision of a heaven on earth, and anti-utopia loses its corresponding function as the mocker of these hopes and the adversary of that vision with its own evocation of an earthly hell.

(Kumar 422-23)

Though dystopia takes its all materials from utopia, it in turn, presents utopian hopes and aspirations upside-down. It meticulously foregrounds all the hazardous conditions

of life like danger, threat, forceful migration, theft, robbery, crimes, illegal activities and so on. In short, it presents a parlous situation of life. Dehumanization and mechanization are also striking themes of anti-utopia (108). Human norms and values are overwhelmingly sidelined.

With the most chilling anti-utopias like *The War of the Worlds*, H.G. Wells terrifies his late Victorian public. Victorian sense of safe and tranquil life is shattered. Presenting the worst condition of people, Wells interrogates and critiques the role of government as it fails to grasp the idea that forewarned should be forearmed. Due to the lack of precautions and preventions of the government, the situation becomes precarious and, as a result, the whole country is burning and people are suffering as:

. . . through all the vastness of London from Ealing to East Ham - people were rubbing their eyes and opening windows to stare out and ask aimless questions, and dressing hastily as the first breath of the coming storm of fear blew through the streets. It was the dawn of the great panic. London, which had gone to bed on Sunday night oblivious and inert, was awakened in the small hours of Monday morning to a vivid sense of danger. (82)

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. In order to show that the government has not lost its grip and coherence, misinformation is imparted about the nature and power of the Martians as “stability, undoubtedly, has a strong bearing; most of the types of utopia have strongly emphasized it, as an achieved perfection or a self-adjusting harmony” (Williams 210). The truth about the Martians is unknown to

people. It is interpreted that the Martians are "dangerous because, no doubt, they are mad with terror. Perhaps they expected to find no living things - certainly no intelligent living things" (34). The grotesque distortion of the truth makes the situation even more dangerous. Due to the lack of proper information, the world went in ignorance of one of the gravest dangers that ever threatened the human race" (10). People having knowledge about the Martians are not aware of the danger that ensues, as:

Many people had heard of the cylinder, of course, and talked about it in their leisure, but it certainly did not make the sensation that an ultimatum to Germany would have done. In London that night poor Henderson's telegram describing the gradual unscrewing of the shot was judged to be canard, and his evening paper, after wiring for authentication from him and receiving no reply - the man was killed - decided not to print a special edition. (35)

The news of the Martians doesn't cause any 'sensation' to the people and they live an usual life. A London journalist, Henderson's news about the Martians is interpreted as false and rumour and is not published. Moreover, the reporting of the Martians by the artilleryman is dismissed as "confounded nonsense" (58). So, there is "a fixed idea that these Monsters must be sluggish: 'crawling' 'creeping painfully'" (75).

Overlooking and ignoring the power of the Martians, people talk about them only in their 'leisure' time. The news about the Martians doesn't stir anything but becomes just a 'lark' for people (38).

The scientists and the authority holders are not conscious about the possible dangers and threats to human beings due to the arrival of these Martians. They underestimate the power and strength of the Martians thinking that firstly, the

Martians would weigh three times more on Earth than on Mars and as a result their power and strength decrease. Secondly, the atmosphere of the earth contains far more oxygen and far less argon than Mars, which makes their life difficult. Thirdly, all overlook the fact that "the mechanical intelligence as the Martians possessed was quite able to dispense with muscular exertion at a pinch" (33). Even after the destruction of many places and killing of great numbers of people, other people pretend as if they are completely safe and are not concerned with the Martians. The lack of proper information about the Martians is clearly exhibited in the conversation between the narrator and two men and a woman at the gate of Oriental Terrace:

'What news from the common?' I said.

'Ain't yer just *been* there?' asked the man.

'People seen fair silly about the common', said the woman over the gate. What's it all about?'

'Haven't you heard of the men from Mars?' said I – 'the creatures from Mars?'

'Quite enough,' said the woman over the gate. 'Thanks'; and all three of them laughed.

I felt foolish and angry. (32)

The ridiculous conversation with these people infuriates the narrator. By neglecting the news of the Martians, these people try to live an ideal life of happiness and progress. Some of the people welcome the Martians' civilization in order to develop the earthly civilization. The narrator wants to get a manuscript from the Martians to know about the Mars. One of his neighbours wants to study about the Martians and feels pity as they make themselves so 'unapproachable' and says that, "it would be curious to know how they live on another planet; we might learn a thing or two" (38).

For him the cylinders of the Martians are "blessed things" (38). Thus, the Martians are considered as the ambassadors of a new and advanced civilization.

A Deputation i.e. delegation group is made involving Ogilvy, Stent, Henderson and others. This delegation group waving a white flag approaches the cylinder and signals that human beings too are intelligent. When the Martians turn their Heat-Rays against the delegation group, most of the members are swept out of existence. These events indicate that the Martians are completely remorseless and merciless, and without any sense of emotion and empathy. Even after the destruction of the Martians, men spread their helping hands. Anticipating some possibilities of a collision, Ogilvy and Stent telegraph to the barracks in order to get "the help of a company of soldiers to protect these strange creatures from violence" (29). The attempt of men to protect the Martians becomes counter-productive to themselves.

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. Instead of unifying themselves against the Martians, they are engaged in hot discussion and dispute over different unnecessary and futile things including who has "authorized the movements of the troops" of the Martians (39). The soldiers become coward and selfish, and think only of the trenches:

'Crawl up under cover and rush 'em, say I', said one.

'Get aht!' said another. 'What's cover against this 'ere 'eat?

Sticks to cook yer! What we got to do is to go as near as the ground'll let us, and then drive a trench.'

'Blow yer trenches! You always want trenches; you ought to ha' been born a rabbit, Snippy.'

'Ain't they got any necks then?' said a third, abruptly - a little, contemplative, dark man, smoking a pipe. (39)

The armies and soldiers become totally irresponsible towards their duty and responsibility. The altruistic and nationalistic feelings of the military are severely criticized. Instead of safe-guarding and guaranteeing their security, they are preoccupied with only trenches. The officers also are "mysterious as well as busy" and don't know anything (40). They are ignorant of what is happening in the country. Due to extreme harassing and tormenting situation, "people were hiding in trenches and cellars" (54). All military forces go from house to house warning people to leave houses or "to take refuge in their cellars as soon as the fighting [beings] (60). The lieutenant of the Cavalry Soldiers himself is engaged in "clearing people out of their houses" (58). Instead of helping the people, "three or four soldiers stood on the lawn of the inn, starting and jesting at the fugitive, without offering to help" (61). Moreover, they are "breaking the heads of people" (92). When the Martians fire their guns, "the earthly artillery made no reply" (88). The military force is completely disorganized. So, the major Eden of the Inkerman barracks is "reported to be missing" (37). The whole battalion of the Cardigan Regiment is destroyed by the Martians:

About seven o'clock last night the Martians came out of the cylinder, and, moving about under on armour of metallic shields, have completely wrecked Woking station with the adjacent houses, and massacred an entire battalion of the Cardigan Regiment. No details are known. Maxims have been absolutely useless against their armour; the field- guns have been disabled by them. (74-75)

The Martians in *The War of the Worlds* employ excavating and building machines, which assemble the tripods - highly mobile, impervious fighting machines that can destroy the English guns and warship at will and can cover ground quickly. Even the military forces are not safe from the Martians' attack. Though they outwardly sympathize the people and urge not to lose their heart, they can't normalize the situation. Both their weapons as well as military power prove weak and ineffective before the Martians. Grasping the gravity of the situation, the Martians employ the best possible strategy. In order to weaken and paralyze the government, they break the important infrastructure. The destruction of buildings, schools, churches, different means of transportation, railway lines and "the interruption of telegraphic communication" help the Martians to break down the overall system of the government (72). The strategic war of the Martians is clearly glimpsed as:

These Martians did not advance in a body, but in a line, each perhaps a mile and a half from his nearest fellow. They communicated with one another by means of siren-like howls, running up and down the scale from one note to another. . . 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.(84-85)

The Martians' movement is highly-systematic and organized. They seem to be fully-trained with complex warfare. They communicate telepathically, though contents of their communication are beyond human comprehension. They "distribute themselves at equal distances along a curved line" (85). Moreover, "they took up their positions in the huge crescent about their cylinders in an absolute silence. It was a crescent with twelve miles between its horns. Never since the devising of gun powder was the beginning of the battle so still" (86). Due to the skillful warfare of the Martians,

suffused with advanced weapons, nobody can escape within the range of the weapons. So, they kill men "as methodically as men might smoke out a wasp's nest" (90). 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 Martians are clever enough to be aware of "the power of the terrestrial weapons" and manage sentinel, equipped with fighting machines to guard themselves (67). The Martians intend mainly to demoralize human beings and dethrone them from the exultant position of the nature, thereby mapping the power of their military forces:

. . . the glittering Martians went to and fro, calmly and methodically spreading their poison-cloud cover this patch of country and then over that, laying it again with their steam-jets when it had served its purpose, and taking possession of the conquered country. They do not

seem to have aimed at extermination so much as at complete demoralization and the destruction of any opposition. They exploded any stores of powder they came upon, cut every telegraph, and wrecked the railways here and there. They were hamstringing mankind. (105)

The government becomes only nominal and remains as still as a statue. It can't touch the heart of people. The destruction of whole country and suffering and killing of people don't remind its duty and responsibility. So, "there was a strong feeling in the streets that the authorities were to blame for their incapacity to dispose of the invaders without all this inconvenience" (80). The extreme criticism of the people doesn't improve the weaknesses of the government.

Speculating the gloomiest and darkest future world, dystopian fictions show the bad consequences of scientific and technological inventions as well as complete failure of the government. It represents "a very unpleasant imaginary world in which ominous tendencies of our present social, political and technological order are projected in some disastrous future culmination" (Abrams 218). The negligence as well as weakness of the government leads towards such a situation which is extremely intolerable, unbearable and suffocating. Moreover dystopia presents a totalitarian form of the government is completely disinterested about the plight and predicament of people. "The totalitarian government tries to control the thoughts and emotions of its subjects at least as completely as it controls their actions" (Kumar 306). Due to extreme scarcity and suffering, people are forced to live a tremendously harsh and difficult life. There is not good and harmonious relationship among the people. When the government organs lose their coherence and harmony, the situation goes beyond control and consequently people are alienated and families are fragmented.

The War of the Worlds seriously problematizes the utopian ideals of happy and harmonious life. Though, outwardly there seems to be good relationship among the people, it is tinged with selfishness and parochialism. The crowd pushes the shop assistant into the cylinder, making him the first victim of the Martians. The artilleryman leaves his battalion when it is attacked by the Martians. Moreover, in his extreme selfishness he doesn't provide any food to the narrator when they meet at the last though they had good relationship earlier and the narrator had helped him in difficult situation. Obsessed with the life of only his wife, the narrator takes a dog-cart from the landlord of the Spotted Dog Inn, who is unaware of the situation. Furthermore, to save his life the narrator mercilessly kills the curate, who is co-sufferer in his sojourn for many days. Unlike in classical utopia where there is the culmination of harmonious and mutual relationship in *War of the Worlds* doubt, suspicion, enmity and cruelty among the people are presented. The so-called good and harmonious relationship among the people collapses in a catastrophic and apocalyptic situation.

Due to death and destruction of the Martians' Heat-Rays and Black Smoke, many characters eschew narrow escape from death. The narrator "stood, there [in Thames river], breast-high in the almost boiling water, dumbfounded at my position, hopeless of escape" (65). He is "scalded, half-blinded, [and] agonized" (66). The narrator's brother misses a hoof of the horse by a hair's breadth when running away from London (118). The narrator and the curate find 'a ghostly kitchen' of a deserted house, they nearly lose their life:

Everything in the kitchen kept out, clearly visible in green and black and vanished again. And then followed such a concussion as I have never heard before or since. So, close on the heels of this as to seem

instantaneous came a thud behind me, a clash of glass, a crash and rattle of falling masonry all about us, and the plaster of the ceiling came down upon us, smashing into a multitude of fragments upon our heads. I was knocked headlong across the floor against the oven handle and stunned. I was insensible for a long time. (119)

The narrator and the curate stay in the ruined kitchen for few days, where the narrator kills the curate to avoid the attraction of the Martians. When his battalion meets the tragic fate of the Martians' incursion, the artilleryman runs for his life and survives by a hair's breadth. He finds "himself lying under a heap of charred dead men and dead horse" (53). His repeated words "they wiped us out," "they wiped us out" clearly express fear, tear and hopelessness caused due to the wide-spreading explosion, detonation, fusillade, and conflagration and rattling of the Maxims and guns (52). Instead of being devoted and dedicated to his duty, he indulges in drinking and begins to "sob and weep like a little boy, in a perfect passion of emotion" (52). Terrified and frightened by the Martians' invasion, he becomes too much selfish, self-centered and even traitor to his battalion, and thinks about only his protection. Due to his extreme selfishness, the artilleryman becomes the sole survivor of the Cardigan Regiment. He embodies the selfishness and self-centeredness of the whole state mechanism. Like him other military forces as well are concerned only with themselves, not with public welfare.

Utopian vision is neither possible nor practicable in day-to-day life situation. If anybody envisions a utopian world, it is full of inherent contradictions and paradoxes. Since no world can be completely flawless, the imagination of utopian world remains self-contradictory. It is just the outcome of the imagination of frustrated and depressed people who want to get rid of their troubles and problems

because "utopian thought is profoundly inherent in human nature, man wounded by the evil of the world, inevitably evokes an image of a perfect, harmonious social order where he will be happy" (Elliott 89-90). It is general and innate nature of man to dream an integrated and coherent world if he is living in a fragmented world. "This is the essence of utopia: that it is destined to surmount the fragmentation of the world and bring wholeness and integrity" (90). Everyone in this world intends to discard the intolerable burden, nausea and sufferings.

In *The War of the Worlds*, the comic and pathetic character, the artilleryman makes his 'grandiose plans' to escape from the present frustrated and fragmented world. He has a great suspicion that the Martians "have gone across London" and "made a bigger camp there" (151). He believes that the Martians "have built a flying-machine and are learning to fly" (152). The narrator is horrified by the artilleryman's projection and thinks that if the Martians make the flying-machine and able to go round the world, "it is all over with humanity" (152). Moreover, for artilleryman, due to the incomparable power between the Martians and human beings, it is not a true war:

And they [the Martians] have made their footing good and crippled the greatest power in the world. They've walked over as. . . .This is not a war. . . .It never was a war any more than there is war between men and ants. . . .There's the ants build their cities, live their lives, have wars, revolutions, until the men want them out of the way, and then they go out of the way. That's what we are now - just ants. Only - (152-153)

Even "the greatest power in the world" is obnoxiously defeated and devastated by the Martians. For the Martians, we are as inferior as the ants are to us. Moreover, the

artilleryman believes that the Martians "are starving in heaps, bolting, treading on each other" and "they want us for food" (153). He also believes that the Martians' war is strategic, against which human beings can't resist. "First, they'll smash us up - ships, machines, guns, cities, all the order and organization" (153). The strategic and planned war waged by the Martians slowly and gradually overthrows whole humanity and human beings out of their existence. "So soon as they've settled all over guns and ships, and smashed our railways, and done all the things they are doing over there, they will begin catching us systematic, picking the best and storing us in cages and things" (153-154). The artilleryman fantasizes an underground life where the men replenish the human race by fornicating with plenty of women (155). The narrator, whose intellectual superiority is never questioned before this invasion, wholeheartedly believes this common soldier's plan to save human race; though he severely castigates it later. Projecting the possible destiny and fate of human beings if the Martians become able to control this world, the artilleryman makes his grandiose but impractical plan as:

We have to invent a sort of life where men can live and breed and be sufficiently secure to bring the children up . . . the tame ones will go like all tame beasts; in a few generations they'll be big, beautiful, rich-blooded, and stupid - rubbish! The risk is that we who keep wild will go savage - degenerate into a sort of big, savage rat. . . . I mean to live in underground. I have been thinking about the drains . . . under this London are miles and miles - hundreds of miles - and a few days' rain and London empty will leave them sweet and clean. The main drains are big enough and airy enough for anyone. Then there's cellars, vaults, stores, from which bolting passages may be made to the drains.

And railways tunnels and subways . . . and we form a band – able -
bodied, clean-minded men. (156-57)

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". 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.

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). The artilleryman's idea that the Martians "are intelligent things, and they won't hurt us down if they have all they want, they think were just harmless vermin" is the indication of complete surrender (157). 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). When he engages himself only in drinking and smoking instead of working for his plans, his treacherous motives are revealed. The narrator is disillusioned and thinks that the artilleryman is "no longer

the energetic regenerator of his species" (161). He further criticizes the artilleryman as a "strange undisciplined dreamer of great things" (162). 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.

Utopian vision of happy, sacred, serene and peaceful life promised by all religions in general and Christianity in particular is severely castigated in dystopian fictions. Though impossible, Christianity intends to create utopian life both here and hereafter. The concept of paradise becomes problematic as it is not down-to-earth for the people to realize. By assimilating and identifying with the Golden Age, it tries to stand as the representation of the blissful and rejoicing condition of mankind as:

Christianity further spiritualized the classical inheritance of utopia. . . .
 .In seeing the earthly utopia as some kind of simulacrum of the heavenly city of god, Christianity added immeasurably to the ascetic and monastic qualities to be found in certain aspect of the classical inheritance - notably Plato's utopia. Christianity's decisive contribution to utopia partly consisted in taking over and absorbing classical utopian themes, which it fused with its own Judaic and near Eastern inheritance. (Kumar 10)

Christianity superficially distributes the promise of transcendental and everlasting idealized life. Moreover, it attempts to establish "a reign of eternal peace and happiness for all mankind. Men will be grateful and obedient, as children are to the parents who protect and succor them" (121). It professes a new heaven as well as a new earth, where God dwells among men and wipes away all tears from their eyes; there is no death, no sorrow, no cry and no more pain.

In *The War of the Worlds*, before the destruction of the Weybridge church, the curate lives a true monastic life as guided by Christianity. As a staunch advocate of Christianity, he has a strong faith on his religion and believes that god will save from all kinds of sorrows and sufferings. Even after the destruction of his church and the whole of London, he accuses the people and their sins behind this destruction:

Why are these things [destructions] permitted? What sins have we done? The morning service were over, I was walking through the road to clear my brain for the afternoon and then - fire, earthquake, death! As if it were Sodom and Gomorrah [Biblical cities destroyed for their sinfulness]. All our work undone, all the work . . . what have we done - what has Weybridge done? Everything gone - everything destroyed. The church! We rebuilt it only three years ago. Gone! - swept out of existence! Why? (70)

The curate is devoted and dedicated for the service of god. For him, the destruction and devastation which loom large everywhere are the result of sins and crimes committed by people. He is still hopeful that Christ, the Saviour, will resurrect to provide soothing-balm for the suffering people and lead them towards salvation and redemption.

In Christianity, it is believed that following a period of strife and the emergence and defeat of the anti-Christ, Christ will return and rule with his resurrected saints for a thousand years on earth, where the righteous will live in peace and contentment with god (Kumar 14-15). The curate is fully aware of the Christian Millenarianism or Apocalypse, the last judgment and the establishment of the eternal kingdom in heaven. It is a Christian belief that "a terrible war would precede the Messianic age of peace" (Kumar 14). Seeing the culmination of death and destruction,

the curate thinks that Christianity is at its apex and the Day of Judgment has come, as the narrator narrates:

‘This must be the beginning of the end’, he [the curate] said, interrupting me. ‘The end! The great and terrible day of the Lord! When men shall call upon the mountains and the rocks to fall upon them and hide them – hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne!’ . . . ‘But now can we escape?’ he asked suddenly. ‘They [the Martians] are invulnerable, they are pitiless’. (71)

Though the curate thinks that it is the inception of the everlasting Messianic age, he is not ready to face his fate. He attempts to escape from the judgment of the god. Instead of offering himself before the Martians whom he thinks as “Gods' ministers”, he is afraid of death (71). But, “the true utopians believe that a man whose life has become torture to himself will be and should be - glad to die; in these extreme cases the priests and magistrates exhort the patient to take his own life” (Elliott 27). The curate's fear of death as well as fear to be in front of god shows that he is not religious in his heart instead full of sins and vices.

Christian dispensation of love, peace, perfection and freedom are completely subverted in *The War of the Worlds* as the age of war, strife and anarchy is not followed by peace and happiness but by the same things. So, “it was the beginning of the rout of civilization, of the massacre of mankind” (104). London becomes “the city of condemned and derelict” (164). The narrator's brother hears “a special prayer for peace” in the church at the Foundling Hospital, but it is of no avail (75). Christianity and church, which are known as the kingdom of Christ and heaven, become useless to control the situation. H.G. Wells clearly analyzes the predicament and plight of the contemporary civilization and shows the general disorientation and lack of direction

of the society in terms of the absence of any creative forces that can assume the leadership.

Though he is the embodiment of Christianity, the curate shows the helplessness and failure of organized religion when it has to face with the invaders. For the narrator, the curate is "lethargic [and] unreasonable" (116). Instead of showing his patience and temperance, the curate is "timorous and restless" (119). He becomes the victim of himself and his religion. His conflicting personality and loosening grip on reality eventually lead him to start talking loudly of his sins and vices, and his desire for food as:

‘It is just, O God!’ he would say, over and over again. It is just. On me and mine be the punishment laid. We have sinned, we have fallen short. There was poverty, sorrow; the poor were trodden in the dust, and I held my peace. I preached acceptable folly - my God, what folly! When I should have stood up, though I died for it, and called upon them to repent - repent!Oppressors of the poor and needy! . . . The wine press of God!’ (137)

The curate doesn't possess any of the ideals asserted by Christianity. Though Christianity advocates that monks should remove themselves from the worldly affairs of society and uplift above all kinds of sins, the curate is concerned impulsively with eating and drinking. So, he sinks to "the level of an animal" (134). He keeps on "weeping and complaining of his immediate hunger"(136). Moreover, he makes "frothy repentance for his vacant sham of God's service" (137). Intoxicated with heavy drinking, he severely curses the city and its inhabitants as, "Woe unto this unfaithful city! Woe! woe! Woe! woe! woe! to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet" (137-138). He claims that "the world of the Lord is

upon [him]" (138). His outward belief and faith in religious don't provide him any solace.

Dismissing the curate's "stupid rigidity of mind", the narrator questions the utility of religion in catastrophic situation, thereby expressing the disappearance of spiritual values (130). If religion can do nothing in really difficult situation, it is worthless. He says, "What good is religion if it collapses under calamity? Think of what earthquakes and floods, wars and volcanoes, have done before to men! Did you think God had exempted Weybridge? He is not an insurance agent, man" (71). The utopian concept of religion can't be realized and achieved. It is a mere deception over the innocent common people as:

The fundamental promise of the classical utopia is that man is a political animal, whose highest purposes can be achieved through the perfection of social organization. . . . [But, the idea of] the Earthly Paradise, [is] the ironic assertion of the destructive power of unregenerate mankind, and the synecdoche voice of apocalyptic prophecy asserting that no single utopia is final – it is prophecy, even more than irony, that destabilizes the utopian text. (Parrinder 126)

The utopian target of 'the perfection of social organization' is completely impossible. Any attempt to create utopia becomes a mere shadow of utopia. Thus, it subverts the very utopian vision itself. These evidences show the waning belief in religion due to emerging science and technology. The death of curate in the narrative figuratively suggests that his view is discarded as regressive and unfit for the nation. The curate's religious ideas seem anachronistic in the then emerging scientific and technological era. Moreover, through "Stover's interpretation of *The War of the Worlds* is, basically, that while the Martians might appear to be evil, they are by no means monstrous in

the eyes of their creator. They are rather agents of his 'Religion of Progress' (McCarthy 247). The overall situation shows that the Martians can't be taken as the ambassadors of 'Religion of Progress' rather they are the destroyers of the existing religion and civilization. The catastrophe is almost Biblical in space and severity, as if to warn people that there is no hope unless they see the terror of their ways and repent.

The artilleryman is also diametrically against Christianity which causes fear of the hereafter on every Sundays (155). Christianity, for him, deceives people by imparting the idea that hell is built for rabbits not for men and the, Martians are god sent (155). For him Christianity doesn't stand on practical ground and it is "do-nothing religion, very pious and superior and submits to persecution and will of the Lord" (156). So, he thinks that the "cages [Churches] are full of psalms and hymns and piety", this is nothing other than what he calls unnecessary 'eroticism' (150). The Christian utopia can't provide any relief to people in calamities and disasters. Thus, "anti-utopian form discovers the problems, raises questions, and doubts . . . it is a mode of relentless inquisition, of restless skeptical exploration of the very articles of faith on which utopias themselves are built" (Huntington 124). *The War of the Worlds* blatantly questions the over-dependency on scientific and technological inventions.

Utopia provokes a sense of mythological ethos because "all utopias are fed from the source of mythology; the social engineer's blue-prints are merely revised editions of the ancient text" (Kumar 19). Basically it presents extra-ordinary and more perfect life than as usual. But, *The War of the Worlds* presents a different as well as unique story which is the pure product of author's creative mind. It blends Wells' imaginative power with scientific inventions in order to expose the harmful consequences of extreme scientific developments.

The conclusion of *The War of the Worlds* evokes a sense of utopian life as it sends us on a circular journey. At the end of the story, the situation of England gradually improves. In the penultimate chapter, the narrator returns to his house which he thinks is 'desolate' and 'deserted' (176). He re-reads the philosophical paper he was working on when the first Martians cylinder landed at working:

For a space I stood reading over my abandoned arguments. It was a paper on the probable development of Moral Ideas with the development of the civilizing process; and the last sentence was the opening of a prophecy: 'In about two hundred years,' I had written, 'we may expect - ' the sentence ended abruptly. I remembered my inability to fix my mind that morning, scarcely a month gone by
(176)

The incomplete sentence clearly indicates the fear and horror of the narrator and it also hints towards forthcoming disaster and doom. The scientific and technological developments push our civilization towards complete uncertainty.

The Red Weed which grows tumultuously everywhere with astounding vigour and luxuriance supersedes all earthly vegetations (128). But, pathetically, "the tropical exuberance of Red Weed" doesn't last for long and "succumbs almost as quickly as it had spreaded" (145). The ultimate death of the Martians with "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla" - the wail of superhuman note, relieves people from the wide-spreading sense of fear and danger (164). When the Martians are slain by the simple earthly bacteria against which their resisting power is not prepared, there increases "multitudinous hopes and efforts" among the people (170). When "the joyful news [about the Martians' death] had flashed all over the world, a thousand cities, chilled by ghastly apprehensions, suddenly flashed into frantic illuminations" (172). After the thunderstorm of the night

of catastrophe is finished, people return to their respective houses. There are free trains in different places and everything is under repair. 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:

At any rate, whether we expect another invasion or not, 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)

The general foreshadowing of the future is outstanding. 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 ultimate normalization of the situation doesn't bring a utopian life as the world is irreversibly and irrecoverably doomed and destroyed.

People try to forget the invasion as “the ghost of the past, hunting the street . . . silent and wretched, going to and fro, phantasms in a dead city, the mockery of life in a galvanized body” (180). But, the hangover of the death and destruction caused by the Martians loom large everywhere. The death of the Martians and Red Weed doesn't solve the problem because “the survivors of the people scattered over the country - leaderless, lawless, foodless, like sheep without a shepherd - the thousands who had fled by sea” (170). Moreover, hundreds of people becomes out of work. The situation is not improved at all.

Thus, utopian ideals promised by science and technology, state mechanism and religion are completely subverted and reversed in *The War of the Worlds*. The utopian vision of the narrator, the artilleryman and the curate are ruthlessly aborted without moving even a step forward. The seemingly happy and peaceful life of English people is completely destroyed by the Martians' invasion. Similarly, the ultimate overthrow of the Martians and Red Weed doesn't bring any positive change to improve the situation. So, *The War of the Worlds* is a mock utopia, which extremely satirizes the very concept of utopia itself.

III. Dystopia: Disillusionment with the Dream of Idealized Future

From the deep and close analysis of *The War of the Worlds* through the critical perspective of dystopia, it can be concluded that the novel is a genuine subversion of utopian ideals of life like happiness, harmony, peace, progress, prosperity and unity. Wells' persistent attempts to excavate an oasis of humanity in the wilderness of death and destruction pathetically becomes failure, mainly due to the wide-spreading and all-engulfing warfare between human beings and the Martians with whom there is no possibility of any truce and communication. Envisioning a traumatic and apocalyptic invasion of the native England by the technologically and mentally superior Martians, he clearly exposes the collapse of utopian hopes and aspirations treacherously promised by both state mechanism and religion.

The main thrust of *The War of the Worlds* is purely anti-utopian as the corrupt and conflict-ridden world is presented within the disguised form of utopia. 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 to be counter-productive and self-destructive to them. Scientific and technological development leads to "war, imperialism, and eventually cultural disintegration" (Sibley 259). Intoxicated with and proud of their scientific and technological power, the English people launch their battle against other races including the Tasmanians and even wage "a war of extermination" (9). They become completely helpless and weak before the armoured Martians. The advanced and sophisticated invention of the Martians like spaceship, weaponry, fighting and flying-machines though help them to spread death and destruction over the peaceful and serene life of the English people and create tumultuous upheavals throughout England but unfortunately become ineffective to protect them from the simple earthly bacteria. In this sense, *The War of*

the Worlds is a deep exploration of the scientific and technological hubris possessed by both the English people and the Martians.

The Martians are taken as the ambassadors of new scientific and technological civilization; but their arrival doesn't create any utopia in this world instead destroys the existing peace and order because "scientific and technological creativity after Eden almost always leads to death and to social and cultural disintegration" (Sibley 257). In dystopian fiction, the inevitability and desirability of science and technology are severely questioned as they can't be proved as the key to human freedom and happiness. The government can't fulfill the needs and demands of people and it even tries to cover its flaws and weaknesses by imposing unnecessary censorship on news and information. Superficially it attempts to show that it has complete grip over the entire situation. In spite of the government's pretensions and false information; disorder, chaos, lawlessness, destruction, devastation and massacre loom large everywhere. Instead of presenting a world of abundance and sufficiency the world in *The War of the Worlds* is inflicted with famine, starvation and dire scarcity.

Dramatizing the most horrific, terrific and devastating situation of life of English people, Wells projects the situation of the future world, which is out of the control of state mechanism, due to extreme development of science and technology. 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 never fully describe" (160). Our civilization is moving towards uncertain complexity.

Frightened and frustrated with the distressing and disgusting situation, the artilleryman degenerates into the life of underground world. In his underground

utopian world, he even fantasizes a plan to replenish human race by letting men to have sex with plenty of women. But, his dreams and plans are proved to be impractical and unsuitable to change the situation. The curate's outward devotion and dedication to his religion turns to be false. He clings to scriptures that offer neither solace nor any rational explanation of humanity's present plight. His religion and church both fail to provide shelter from the present disaster.

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). Furthermore, he focuses on "the inevitability and necessity of war as the precipitant and catalyst of the coming changes" (189). Though, he is a staunch advocate of 'war to end war', it is contradictory in itself. His concept of the necessity of war as the initiation of new age of peace and serenity is totally wrong as peace can't be found at the other side of war. Conversely, war increases enmity, conflict and rivalry; and as a result, the situation becomes even more dangerous and problematic. It only fulfils the vested-interests and selfish-motives of the power holders. So, it becomes worthless and useless for the common people.

Though *The War of the Worlds* ends with the ultimate overthrow of the Martians and Red Weed, it is predominantly pessimistic as it can't trigger any hope and aspiration. The survival of human beings from this particular catastrophe can't make them safe and certain because they will have to face the same fate and crisis that the Martians have faced. Humanity's highly-vaunted knowledge and power leads only towards decadence and degeneration. Thus, the attempt of science and technology, state mechanism and religion to create utopian world, which is beyond their capacity, ultimately parodizes the utopian vision itself and becomes a mere mirage of utopia.

Abstract

The War of the Worlds dramatizes H.G. Wells' severe antipathy to scientific optimism and technological determinism. It destabilizes utopian ideals of perfect and happy life thereby excavating the apocalyptic and catastrophic consequences of extreme development of science and technology. 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. Elucidating Wells' extraordinary power and imagination of making perfect fusion of literature with science, *The War of the Worlds* foregrounds anti-utopian vision exposing sordid anxiety and death-in-life alienation of the unnamed narrator who makes strenuous and endless efforts to save himself and his wife from the ruthless attack of the Martians. The overall situation of entire England becomes stupendously horrific, terrific, dehumanizing and devastating.

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