



THE MAIN CHARACTER'S SURVIVAL INSTINCT IN HERBERT GEORGE WELLS'S NOVEL THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

Ilham¹, Sumarwati K. Poli², Mustafa Makka³

^{1) 2) 3)} Hasanuddin University Makassar

¹⁾ garahiesandos@gmail.com

²⁾ wimpoli40@gmail.com

³⁾ mustafa_mus@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

*One of the most interesting aspects of *The War of the Worlds* is the way in which the Martians are described, and the manner with which they take over the world. The aims of the study were to reveal the survival instinct of the main character in the novel "The War of The Worlds" of Herbert George Wells's work, and how changes in behavior and the main character was currently in a state of urgency to survive. This study employed qualitative descriptive study with psychoanalytical approach initiated by Sigmund Freud, focused on literature as a reflection of real life. This research data were collected from the novel "The War of The Worlds" (1898). The study revealed that survival instinct of the main character of novel came from basic instincts, life instinct (Eros) and death instinct (Thanatos) according to Sigmund Freud's theory. The Martians described as aliens invaded earth much more sophisticated than human, which made the main character who just a civil society striving to stay alive. The Martians had only one purpose, to destroy all humans and take over the planet. During the Martians invasion, the main character was not only trying to survive but also strived for source of food and water. In his effort to stay alive, the main character in the novel *The War of The Worlds* (1898) had to kill others to guarantee he stayed alive. Being trapped in regret and despair, he decided to end his own life, but something strange happened to The Martians, they were killed by bacteria. Human were immune to the bacteria, but The Martians from Mars were not and eventually died.*

Keywords: *Survival Instincts, The War of The Worlds, Herbert George Wells.*

INTRODUCTION

Literary work is one of human cultural products, which is reflected by socio-cultured diversities where it is produced. Literary work cannot be separated from society, although it is

produced by an author. Wellek & Warren (1968), state that "if all truth is conceptual and propositional, then the arts even the art of literature-cannot be forms of truths". Searching the truths of human being can be done through

imagination, creation and artistic written of literary work. Imaginative and artistic value that the author presents must not be lost from social condition in order his or her literary works have identity.

The researcher takes the novel of Wells (1898), a novel about an alien invasion entitled *The War of the Worlds*, later caused a panic when an adaptation of the tale was broadcast on American radio. On Halloween night, Orson Welles went on the air with his version of *The War of the Worlds*, claiming that aliens had landed in New Jersey.

There are some relevant study related to this research. Thanki (2011), from Saurashtra University conducted research entitled "*Time, Space and Fantasy in the Novels of H.G Wells, Arthur C. Clarke and J.K Rowling: A Critical Study*". In his research, Pratiksha tried to find the deep impact of the text on human psyche and also the cut across the genre of fantasy, social novel, and science fiction. His thesis tries to look at the texts from a critical point of view and find out how such fantasy novels are based on real life and effect real life in return. The genre has been explored earlier and the works have been studied individually or in reference to other writers and works.

Santana (2012), from Hasanuddin University entitled "*The Main Character's Resistance in Jerome David Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye*". In his thesis, Lalu Santana used genetic structuralism to analyze the main character's resistance in the novel. Resistance

in his study is aimed to denote the character's action against external circumstances or social condition (external conflict) and the action in rejecting self-ability (internal conflict).

Mutmainnah (2015), from Hasanuddin University, entitled "*Loneliness in James Tucker's Ralph Rashleigh*". She conducts her research by using the theory of psychology to enrich the horizon through an examination of the loneliness and how the Australian landscape contributes in building the loneliness which occurs in the novel.

Blackman (2011), his article *Defense Mechanism in the 21st Century* emphasized that defenses can be found in language, entertainment, humor and literature. People use defense theory to explain various types of human behavior, thought, and psychopathology. Defenses inform the research of some neuroscientists. People can also use defense theory to refine ideas about supportive and interpretive types of psychotherapy.

Hastriawati (2016), in her thesis *Self-Defense Mechanism in Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night*, emphasized that the past memory and the traumatic experiences that happened in the life of each character in O'Neill's novel, give the big influence on their attitude. Her study also described several types of defense mechanism that used by the characters to solve problems.

In this study, the researcher tries to analyze the survival instincts of the main character in Herbert George Wells "*The War of*

the Worlds" and because the psychoanalysis problems in the main character's behavior and attitude, the analysis will be accordingly based on psychoanalysis approach is initiated by Sigmund Freud. Study of literature through psychology approach should be carried out with psychoanalyses. It means the study of literary texts which reflect the psychological aspect of a particular character. It is difficult to capture everything that psychology encompasses in just a brief definition, but topics such as development, personality, thoughts, feelings, emotions, motivations, and social behaviors represent just a portion of what psychology seeks to understand, predict and explain. (Hothersall, 2013).

Nietzsche thought that the basic "stuff" of the world was not atoms or love or survival or God but the "will to power". I accept power as the best candidate, but I propose a complimentary yin-yang partner. I call it the "will to laughter" (or just "laughter" if "power" is its partner) and it is intimately involved with Eternal Recurrence. It is the world's delight and happiness in its own useless dance, the eternal laughable folly of power, the lightness of awareness, and the freedom of not wanting or having to make the world better. (Chapko, 2010).

As a matter of fact, literature and psychology can be symbiotic in role towards life, because they both have a function in this life. Both are the same deal with human issues as being individuals and social beings. They are

utilizing the same foundation that makes the human experience as a study. Therefore, it is considered that the use of psychological approaches is very important in the research of literature. (Minderop, 2010).

This research aims to reveal the psychological changes of the main character in the novel. Hence, the researcher decides the title of this journal is *The Main Character's Survival Instinct In Herbert George Well's Novel The War Of The Worlds*.

METHODOLOGY

Type of Research

This research is conducted by using descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative is a kind of research that gives better understanding into describing the entire phenomenon related to survival instinct in the novel of *The War of the World*. The aim of this analysis is to summarize a set of data related to the phenomenon of survival instinct that come from the novel that may be in the form of utterances and action. .

Source of Data

The data used by the researcher are taken from Herbert George Wells's novel entitled *The War of the World* which was first serialized in 1897 in the UK by *Pearson's Magazine* and in the US by *Cosmopolitan* magazine. The novel's first appearance in hardcover was in 1898 from publisher William Heinemann of London. Written between 1895

and 1897, it is one of the earliest stories that detail a conflict between mankind and an extraterrestrial race. In addition, the secondary data are taken from various books, journal, articles, and website on internet. Through this secondary data, the researcher collects and uses the relevant data to the topic.

Method of Collecting Data

Collecting data in this research uses literature technique and noted technique. Literature technique is to use books and theories that discuss survival instinct and psychology. The researcher collects the data through the novel itself, the literary history, and the related scientific writing such thesis, article and essay both from book and internet. Note technique is to note the data in the form of quotations that have been found into a memorandum of data noting.

Method of Analyzing Data

In analyzing the data, the researcher conducts descriptive qualitative method. Sources of data are obtained from books, journal, articles, and website on internet and other scientific reports that have relevance to this research. Then the researcher makes the selection of samples or data to be examined with a paper record along with pages of data, namely texts containing elements identified to be assessed. In the next step, the researcher conducts an analysis of the data done through reading strategies using the Psychoanalysis

approach by Sigmund Freud in analyzing the phenomenon of survival instinct of the main character in the novel *The War of the Worlds*.

FINDINGS

As explained before that this research uses psychoanalysis approach to find out the survival instinct of the main character as revealed in *The War of The Worlds*. This research found that the survival instinct is experienced only by the main character in *The War of The Worlds*.

The survival instinct of the main character in *The War of The Worlds* could see in this quotation.

I put out my hand and felt the meat chopper hanging to the wall. In a flash I was after him. I was fierce with fear. Before he was halfway across the kitchen I had overtaken him. With one last touch of humanity I turned the blade back and struck him with the butt. He went headlong forward and lay stretched on the ground. I stumbled over him and stood panting. He lay still. (Page: 104)

The main character is clearly visible in the particular section of the novel and it shows the Id because of the aggressive actions that lead to the death of his colleague who had been together for survival. Moreover, if the main character does not perform that action, it will display a sense of displeasure and pain.

The life instinct is essential for sustaining the life of the individual as well as the

continuation of the species. While they are often called sexual instincts, these drives also include such things as thirst, hunger, and pain avoidance. The energy created by the life instincts is known as *libido*. Behaviors commonly associated with the life instinct include love, cooperation and other pro-social actions.

The first house we entered, after a little difficulty with the window, was a small semi-detached villa, and I found nothing eatable left in the place but some moldy cheese. There was, however, water to drink; and I took a hatchet, which promised to be useful in our next house-breaking. (Page: 88)

At the moment, the main character still shows pro-social attitudes to curate. They are both looking for food at any place in the area of Sheen. They do not know when *the Martians* strike and disaster come to an end, what they know is to stay alive by collecting food and water they can get to survive for the next few days.

Sigmund Freud mentions that behavior which falls short of the ideal-self may be punished by the superego through guilt. The super-ego can also reward us through the ideal self when we behave 'properly' by making us feel proud.

I retraced every step of our conversation from the moment when I had found him crouching beside me, heedless of my thirst, and pointing to the fire and smoke

that streamed up from the ruins of Weybridge. We had been incapable of co-operation—grim chance had taken no heed of that. Had I foreseen, I should have left him at Halliford. (Page: 111)

The main character haunted by the curate's death, though he wants us to know that he was not really guilty because it was a sequence of unforeseeable accidents that led him to take action which ends with the curate's death.

How does Ego resolve conflicts between demands to reality, the desires of the Id detained by the superego? In the view of Freud, desires conflicting of personality structure that produces anxiety. For example, when Ego resists the urge to achieve pleasure of the Id, anxiety felts. It spread and results in uncomfortable conditions when the ego feels that Id can cause interference to the individual. Anxiety alerts the ego to resolve the conflict through ego defense mechanism, protecting the ego while reducing the anxiety that produced by the conflict.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded how the defense mechanism is closely related to the survival instinct, "defense mechanism does not reflect the personality in general, but it also can affect the development of personality". The main character in the novel *The War of the Worlds* at first was an ordinary people, experiencing psychological changes drastically during the process of attacking by *the Martians* and the change caused by the

urge to survive. The researcher will give an explanation based on the theory of defense mechanism by Sigmund Freud.

DISCUSSION

In this novel, the researcher found the psychological changes that occur on the main character and the researcher used psychoanalysis approach by Sigmund Freud to map the occurrence of such changes. The researcher found the Id, Ego, Superego, Life Instinct, Death Instinct, Repression, Sublimation, Projection, Diversion, rationalization, Reaction Formation, Regression, Aggression and Apathy, Fantasy and Stereotype, shown by the main character in his quest to survive from *the Martians* invasion.

In the novel *The War of The Worlds*, the main character interacts with some other characters, some of them are the main character's wife, Ogilvy, the Artilleryman, the Curate, Henderson, and Stents. While some other characters mentioned in the novel, the story leads to the brother of the main character, namely Mrs. Elphinstone, Ms. Elphinston, and Lord Garrick. The researcher does not take part of the story of the main character's siblings since the researcher only focused on the survival instincts of the main character.

The climax is when the main character kills the curate. In this section, the main character shows the Id without thinking and spontaneously kills the curate. Shortly, after the

death of the curate, superego of the main character occurs marked by a sense of regret. He thinks that it is not the appropriate action taken by people like him. To suppress his guilt, the main character rationalizes his actions by focusing all the bad things entirely to the curate. By that way, the main character justifies his actions to kill the curate.

The desire to meet his wife, who he has left in Leatherhead, dashed with the news that Leatherhead has also been destroyed by *the Martians*. The main character decides back to Woking, returning to his home. Unexpectedly, his wife has been waiting in the ruins of his house in Woking. That is a happy ending after all the suffering, trying to survive from *the Martians* attack.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The War of the Worlds novel is more directed to the impact that occurs to someone in case of a war. Herbert George Wells provide such depictions through the main character in the novel. The researcher then tries to examine the psychological changes that occur in the main character using psychoanalysis approach by Sigmund Freud. Herbert George Wells once said "when I see people cycling, I felt calm, but when I see people using motorized machines, I started to feel anxious", a phrase which suggests the thought that showed concerns about the development of technology that can be achieved by humans but used as a tool of power. In the novel *The War of the Worlds* we

see how the enemy has more sophisticated technology than the human at the time, so that eventually it is difficult to defeat them only using the tools of combat the humans have. Herbert George Wells focuses the story of what had happened to civilians during the war (The Martians and the humans). The main character in the novel *The War Of The Worlds* depicted willing to do anything to survive even if had to kill another human being, a situation that quite in opposite ways with the normal condition without war, where people can live side by side without harming other human beings. From the novel *The War Of The Worlds* we can learn how the main character's psychological changes against difficult situation, at first the main character thinks that he is an educated and moral person but then he has to break all what he think was right only to stay alive. In a very depressing situation, a man could do anything, defending his existence due to his survival instinct. The researcher hopes for the next researcher who use the same object to analyze this novel can compare it to the real-life situation (war history) in order to give the best understanding to the reader about the psychological changes which happen in one or more individuals. The novel takes the setting in English on 19th century, so by the next research that compares it to real world, can enrich the knowledge about the English beside the benefit and the cause of war from the novel itself.

REFERENCES

- Blackman J.S. (2011). Defense Mechanisms in the 21st Century. Diakses November 22th 2015. Available from: <http://www.psychiatry.queensu.ca/assets/.../Spring2011.pdf>
- Chapko B. (2010). *Thus Spoke Zarathustra F. Nietzsche*. Accessed on 22 November 2015. Available from: <http://nationalvanguard.org/books/Thus-Spoke-Zarathustra-by-F.-Nietzsche.pdf>
- Hastriawati. (2016). *Self-Defense Mechanisms in Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Tesis). Makassar: Hasanuddin University.
- Hothersall D. (2013). *History of Psychology, 4th ed.* Accessed on 26 January 2016. Available from: <https://www.verywell.com/psychology-4014660>
- Minderop A. (2010). *Psikologi Sastra, Karya Sastra, Metode, Teori, dan Contoh Kasus*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Mutmainnah. (2015). *Loneliness in James Tucker's Ralph Rashleigh* (Tesis). Makassar: Hasanuddin University.
- Santana L. (2012). *The Main Character's Resistance in Jerome David Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye* (Tesis). Makassar: Hasanuddin University.
- Thanki P. (2011). *Time, Space and Fantasy in the Novels of H.G Wells, Arthur C. Clarke and J.K Rowling: A Critical Study* (Tesis). Gujarat: Saurashtra University
- Wellek R. & Warren. (1968). *Theory of Literature*. New York: Third edition, A Harvest Book Harcourt, Brace and World Inc.
- Wells H.G. (1898). *The War of The Worlds*. Lexington: Tribeca Books.