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ENG- 211

4/19/2021

Critique on Human Intelligence

H.G Wells composed “The World of Worlds,” and tells us about how humans went about with the encounter they had with the Martians when they invade England. H.G Wells gave us a representation of what events happened during the invasion and how things were handled by both humans and the Martians. When the Martians first landed in England, humans were astounded by the cylinder, the Martians’ transportation. From how humans reacted to the cylinder at first and how they reacted after the Martians came out, showed how humans failed at reacting quickly to the invasion. The Martians invading England is an example of how humans need to redefine their ideas and start thinking beyond themselves as being the smartest species in the universe. H.G Wells gives us an example of the difference between humans and Martians and shows us that the Martians are more equipped for this invasion than the humans. Humans only survived because of natural selection and if was not for that they would have not survived. H.G Wells illustrates how humans can be, both egotistic and clueless when encountered by higher intelligence in “The War of the Worlds,” questioning if humans are capable enough to confront higher beings for human survival.

Before the invasion, the narrator had talked about how people around him did not actually take into consideration the fact that there could be life beyond planet Earth. Humans around him, for example Ogilvy, who is an astronomer, did not deny the fact that there could be

life beyond Earth, but they did not take it as serious as they should have. Not even when the invasion occurred did, they quickly take it seriously. The narrator first stated, “No one would have believed, in the last years of the nineteenth century, that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligence greater than man’s and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns 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. With infinite complacency men went to and fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter. It is possible that the infusoria under the microscope do the same” (Wells 1.I.1). No one ever really knows for sure if Earth is being watched by unknown species but being prepared for an invasion would help humanity by defending themselves against these types of situations. Being prepared when encountered by unknown species will help humans prove how advanced they are to the Martians and to themselves. Yet, they were not. In *War of the Worlds* it states, “Yet the next day there was nothing of this in the papers except a little note in the *Daily Telegraph*, and the world went in ignorance of one of the gravest dangers that ever threatened the human race. I might not have heard of the eruption at all had I not met Ogilvy, the well-known astronomer, at Ottershaw. He was immensely excited at the news, and in the excess of his feelings invited me up to take a turn with him that night in a scrutiny of the red planet” (Wells 1. I .10). The issue with this is that humans lacked acknowledgement of how serious the invasion was. Why would they ignore it at first? Is it because no one was yet freaking out or that they were not highly aware that these creatures were quietly killing people? Or could it have been because even if Martians came to invade, they would be protected in some way? This shows how egoistic humans can be. Why not announce it louder, with more seriousness the fact that a possible invasion was more likely going

to occur? Also, the information that was available was half of a proportion of the knowledge they had and needed about the Martians (Sanna 238). Failing to do so is one of the main reasons the Martians were ahead of the humans. Even if the regular person was not an expert at knowing about astronomy, there was information available and the narrator in this story is an example of a human using that available information. The Martians came to a new planet and were quick to invade and humans slow to react, this leaves questioning the real definition of human intelligence.

Humans, as of now, are the superior species on planet Earth. According to Webster's Dictionary, the definition of intelligence is, "the ability to apply knowledge to manipulate one's environment or to think abstractly as measured by objective criteria." Humans have been able to adapt and become dominant creatures to their environment. The narrator mentions, "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 us. The intellectual side of man already admits that life is an incessant struggle for existence, and it would seem that this too is the belief of the minds upon Mars. Their world is far gone in its cooling and this world is still crowded with life but crowded only with what they regard as inferior animals. To carry warfare sunward is, indeed, their only escape from the destruction that, generation after generation, creeps upon them. And before we judge of them 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 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?" (Wells 1.I.5). On Earth humans have been able to use their environment and adapt to it by getting what they want and

need. They have been used to it being this way as well. However, in “The War of the Worlds”, the Martians are the creatures who came to foreign land and quickly showed dominance. The technology the Martians had, was more advanced than the technology humans had at the time of the invasion. The objects that the Martians used as their transportation and weapons were the cylinder, the tripods, heat rays, and handling-machines. The Martians had all these types of machinery that were used to transport themselves to planet Earth, roam through England and as weapons. Humans were not prepared for the attack, even though there were many signs. Military forces were the ones that fought against the Martians. The technology that the soldiers used were useless to go against the Martians. They only took down one tripod and when they tried to take down the second one, The Martians were quick to assemble it back together (Sanna 240). Anything that humans were doing did not work because the Martians technology was too advanced leading them to be clueless on how to fight back. Their advancements can be seen as a critique on human advancement. The only weapon they had was the military force and on top of that the people in England were already being misinformed about the invasion. They did not put good use to the technology that was available. Humans are not as prepared as they carry themselves to be . Even though planet Earth is the planet they live on, they were not able to adapt to the current state of the invasion. The Martians together to invade planet Earth and humans failed to even come together to defeat the Martians. Antonio Sanna said in “Are Humans Completely Ignorant?” “human beings pictured at the beginning of The War of the Worlds, they care only about the satisfaction of their appetites and needs, about the execution of their daily ‘little affairs” (Sanna 240). Even still throughout the invasion humans continued to lack knowledge because they surrounded their lives to only worrying about themselves. The point to having intelligence in situations like this is being able to react to your environment. Intelligence

is not limited to any species in the universe. In this situation humans and the aliens are very similar and yet the Martians proved how well they showed dominancy when they arrived. There is no debate in this case that shows who were the smarter species in the case. Humans should have came together to defeat the Martians, but to their luck they did not need to use their intelligence to kill the Martians.

Humans and Martians both show that they are species that are capable enough of showing some form of survival. The arrival of the Martians gave a realization to humans. In “The War Of the Worlds,” the artilleryman said, “It’s just men and ants. There’s the ants builds 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——” (Wells 2. VII. 10). The invasion was a resemble of life on planet Earth, so the invasion put them in a position of realization that they were the weak ones in this situation and that they were no longer the ones in charge. In the favor of the humans, it came down to “survival of the fittest,” because humans are the opportunistic species on Earth. Survival to the fittest means, the animal that is the most fit and the one that has adapted to the environment around (Osterloff). The advantage humans had been that this was their home, and they were the most ‘fit’ for survival. Up until the invasion did they have to worry about foreign species coming and showing dominancy over them. The Martians died because of coming in contact with bacteria. Humans did not kill them off, but they were lucky enough to have adapted to the bacteria that is on Earth. So due to this, the humans survived because of natural selection. According to the article “What is natural selection?” it states, “Natural selection is a mechanism of evolution. Organisms that are more adapted to their environment are more likely to survive” (Osterloff). This comes into play because it explains that planet Earth is home to humans and therefore humans are immune to getting sick from the

bacteria like the bacteria that ended up killing the Martians. Humans did not have advanced resources to go against the Martians. By all the actions that had occurred all throughout, “The War of the Worlds,” if it were not for the bacteria that killed the Martians, humans would have not survived, and the Martians would have taken over Earth. The understanding of external reality is presented as very limited and actually only circumscribed to the human being. Humans lacked the highest knowledge which can be seen as the feasible cause of this disaster (Sanna 244). Humans only survived out of luck. Not even during the invasion would they have imagined that something they live around would be the reason why they survive this attack. It is all because of evolution and natural selection, humans have evolved for centuries and have become immune to their surroundings. Natural selection can only help humans survive to an extent. Intelligence makes a person more fit for survival. Learning how to be able to adapt fast to our environment is what makes a living thing able to survive. If it wants to survive, then it will have to figure out a survival plan. This is an example in which for which humans should learn from. Like mentioned in “The War of the Worlds”, “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 and 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 benefit 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 it has brought are enormous, and it has done much to promote the conception of the commonweal of mankind” (Wells 2. V. 6). If humans want to prove to themselves that they are capable enough to overcome atrocities, they need to learn how to properly use their knowledge, as they seem to have up to this point. With

Wells presenting this story, it shows that humans lack the knowledge that is necessary for survival because they are too focused on themselves. It is a good thing that planet Earth has its advantages and in this invasion that is what has defeated these foreign creatures.

In the final analysis, humans' egoistical behaviors led them to not being capable enough to use their own knowledge to find out a way to defeat the Martians. The Martians were species that were not from this planet and even if the reason they died was because they got exposed to bacteria that was deadly to them, they got to England and showed superiority fast. From the very beginning and even throughout the invasion, humans seemed to still show that they were only self-important while yet not having a clue on what to do. Years before the invasions happened not a lot of humans truly believed that there was life beyond planet Earth. They had the technology to inform them about the invasion, but that failed because there was not enough serious attention showed towards the warnings. Technology has advanced through the years and even if they lacked more advanced technology, they still did not use the technology they had properly. The technology that was used by the Martians were too advanced for what the humans had seen, so the Martians had already had a one-up once they crashed crash landed in England. Seeing that there was a major distinction between the technology of the Martians and humans, it is evident that human intelligence is behind that of the Martians' intelligence. Even though at the end, the Martians ended up dying because of earthly bacteria, humans had no involvement in the vanishment of the Martians. Natural selection did the job that humans should have aimed from the very beginning, which was the defeat of the Martians. The War of The Worlds, provided to humans an example of what are things that they do so often as the higher species of planet Earth, leads to their own downfall. If humans do not start to re-evaluate their behavior and that their intelligence is not limitless, will they be lucky enough to be saved again?

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