

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research



University of Tlemcen
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

Literature in the light of Winters of Discontent

The case of James Herbert's *The Rats* 1974

Extended essay submitted to the department of English
as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization

PRESENTED BY: SUPERVISED BY:

Miss. Soumia ABDELLAOUI Pr. Ilhem SERIR

BOARD OF EXAMINERS:

Pr. Wassila MOURO	President	(University of Tlemcen)
Dr. Ilhem SERIR	Supervisor	(University of Tlemcen)
Dr. MohammedKHELADI	Examiner	(University of Tlemcen)

Academic year:2021/2022

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved father Slimane ABDELLAOUI, the one who helped me to reach my ambitions.

This thesis is also devoted to my dearmother, to all ABDELLAOUIs family, my Friends thank you for being supportive. To my dear instructor and Supervisor Pr. IlhemSERIR who helps me to accomplish this humble thesis.

Acknowledgement

I was fortunate enough to receive the support and help I needed to carry out this work by many people, but first and foremost, all thanks to Allah Almighty for granting me the opportunity to start it, and the strength to complete it.

In all humbleness and gratefulness, I would like to thank my research supervisor, Pr. Ilhem SERIR for all the substantial support and guidance she provided me with throughout my research.

Special thanks go to all the members of the jury including Pr. Wassila MOURO and Dr. Mohammed KHELADI for accepting to read and evaluate this humble research.

My immense gratitude extends further to all my honored teachers in Tlemcen University. Thanks to their constant feedback and advice I made it to this point and managed to accomplish my dissertation.

Last but not least, I owe a great thanks to my parents and siblings for their prayers and kind assistance during my academic journey. I am also very grateful to my closest friends Bendeddouche Soriya, Benguella Kamila, and Bouakel Safa for helping me in times of need and providing me with moral and emotional support.

Abstract

The present work tackles the British literature during the Winters of Discontent period and its demonstration in James Herbert's trilogy entitled *The Rats*. Within this scope, the first chapter offers an overview of literature as a broad concept and sheds light on the British literature most particularly. Respectively, the second chapter delves into post modernism in the light of literature including its historical background, characteristics, etc. As for the third chapter, the Winter of Discontent is highlighted as a period which witnessed the collapse of the British Empire. In this line of thoughts, the historical events which marked the fore mentioned era are introduced as well as a description of literature and the writing characteristics of that time (from 1970 to 1979). Last but not least, the fourth chapter is an attempt to analyze *The Rats* with relation to the contents of the previous chapters.

Table of content

Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgement.....	II
Abstract.....	III
Table of content.....	IV
List of figures.....	V
General Introduction	1
Chapter One: Definition of the main concepts	
1-1 Introduction	5
1-2 English literature defined	5
1-3 Literariness	6
1-4 Issue of identity	6
Chapter two: Era of culture and literature	
2-1 Introduction	10
2-2 Postmodernism	10
2-2-1 Postmodern Literature	11
2-2-2 Strategies and devices in postmodernist writing.....	12
2-3 Conclusion	13
Chapter three: An overview of winters of discontents	
3-1 Introduction	15
3-2 Winters of Discontent	17
3-2-1 Social life	18
3-2-2 Articles that were published during the winters of discount..	20
3-3-3 the status of Literature during winters of Discontent.....	24

3-3 Conclusion25

Chapter Four: The Rats 1974 by James Herbert

4-1 Introduction27

4-2 Author’s Biography27

4-3 literary analysis of the Novel29

4-3-1 plot29

4-3-2characters30

4-3-3 Diction and linguistic view31

4-4The issue of identity in the novel.....33

4-5Conclusion33

General Conclusion 35

Bibliography.....38

List of Figures:

Figure 3.1: British public sector workers went on strike over pay.

Figure 4.1: The author James Herbert.

Figure 4.2: The original cover of *The Rats* by James Herbert

General Introduction

The post modernism era had witnessed several changes in the social side and literary side too. The Great Britain had seen its worst and darkest years with the spread of winter of discontent at an unbelievable point (not even burying the dead and letting them be an easy price to the dogs or rats). It was the war itself outside which led to moral decay and the appeal of the social ills of course each part of the social problem will affect directly the literature side in an explicit manner a lot of the British writers were influenced by this phenomena such as James Herbert who had successfully painted the truth untold in his novel *The Rats* about what was truly lived by the citizens at that period and shown the link between social problems and literature.

Literary speaking, British literature has changed in the postmodernist period. It brought certain features and writing characteristics that it had never been before in other periods. It was unique, differentiable, and easy to be recognizable especially the one that took place in the United Kingdom. However, authors embraced the term and did not feel restrained to follow the postmodernism path. So, as Britain faced a winter of discontent through years, literature has faced the same during the postmodernism period and James Herbert's Novel is the best example that highlighted how literature was affected by the period.

In short, literature had always been the mirror of any social impact of any civilization, it helps any research to make the link between what was lived at that time and what did people feel during it. After the second world war Great Britain had faced a huge challenge to bring back the most powerful empire which ruled the world for over centuries of course the challenge was high with all the damages caused by the war will it be back again could Great Britain take back the control of the world as it was?. Winter of discontent was not a solution when workers could take no more combination of the rising cost of living, low pay, tax increases and fuel and food shortages will be this really the solution waited by Britain?. Thus, the aim of this dissertation is to answer the following questions: How did the empire that the sun never set on, become a jangle? And what is the effect of British literature in the light of winters of discontent?

Chapter one:
Definition of the Main
Concepts

Chapter One: Definition of the main concepts

- 1-1 Introduction
- 1-2 English literature defined
- 1-3 Literariness
- 1-4 Issue of identity

1-1 Introduction :

Literature was written to be read, according to history. It has been created in one specific time and place and read in various venues throughout most of history. Literature the immortal concept, able to live after the death of its own creator. The goal of this anthology is to create a large wave of endless landmarks of literary work. This aspect is in fact, closely related to form, content, context and connected to culture, ideas and reality. English literature, in particular can be defined as literature written in English language, whereas it's the sample of literary history, i.e. the race of culture and philosophy.

1-2 English literature defined

In a capacious sense, Literature is a term used to refer to a range of artistically shaped works written in certain language. English literature (Damrosch, J.H Dettmar 3).

English literature as a term can mean many things, some of them contradictory, and some of them complicated. In one hand, English literature can be defined as literature written in English language. On the other hand, it is literature written in Britain by English writers, including immigrants, people from former British colonies or writers whom their works took place Great Britain. On the flip side, United States' works can be even included within English literature as it handle the same language, yet turning to the word English ones can recognize that it has been taken from the word England which means the language of England. Some of the literary works written in another language but presented there in a translation. This latter, is also part of the English literature. Linguistically speaking the word literature comes from the Latin word *litteratura* or *litteratura* "learning, a writing, grammar", originally "writing formed with letters" which comes from *littera/ littera* which means "letter". The word literature in fact, means things made from letters. So, literature is the art of writing work which can refer to a published sources (Aristova 30). This later, is characterized by the diversity of genre such as fantasy, legends, fairy tales and mystery.

1-3 Literariness :

According to the Russian formalist Jakobson 1921, literariness is the act which makes a given work a literary work. Scientifically mentioning, the object of literary science is not literature itself but literariness. Put simply, to define literature it has to look into the use of the language in a given literary work. Besides, this concept deals with the form of the language and what has been written, it emphasized that the focus resides on the literary creation itself rather than the author/reader or any other extrinsic systems (Erlich 628).

1-4 Questions of identity:

There is no construct more influential than 'identity' whether as individuals or as groups. Back time, questions of identity were crucial aspects of British citizens. Right after Irish-British conflict, the Irish question came back on to the agenda of British politics, citizens including all-classes were wondering about their identity, whether they belong to the protestant parliament or British government (Clarke 340). Furthermore, this last to the break of the British Empire, the wave of immigrants and multiculturalism in the country. It was not new for migrants and immigrants to questioning their selves, but it was matter of identifying their work and represent their own race. According to *The Longman Anthology of British Literature*:

Complicated questions of language and identity have increasingly come to dominate the most recent phase of British Literature. A great paradox of the British postwar period, in its time of imperial shrinkage, involves the fate of the British language. Britain may have been "Kicked out" of many of its former colonies as a governing presence, but English was rarely shown the door at the same time. For economics and cultural reasons English as a global language became even more widely dispersed and dominant after World war II. Of course, the spread of U.S interests has played a role in the hegemony of

English. However, the old contours of the British empire continue to shape Much of the production of English Literature today. In this way, the former

British empire has become part of the fabric of British Literature. V.S. Naipaul,

for example, has long resided in England, but he was born to Indian parents in Trinidad, where the British literary tradition, and an extension of it, as that of any native-born British author. Naipaul's winning of the 2001 Nobel Prize for literature both confirms his international standing and highlights the altered literary geography of English itself (Damrosch et al 2133).

Foucault and some other thinkers states that the identities are constructed by the social institutions and regulations (Elliot 139). Although Identity in literature reflects the writer's personality, culture, and society (ibid.) its characteristics depends on the historical era that the literary work took time. To put the case in point, before the era of postmodernism, identity was stable, a question with an exact answer. Whereas, it turns the reverse more a question without a definite answer. According to David Lyon, in the postmodern social condition, these new media messages provide "frames" for organizing experiencing, giving a sense of. These messages shape identity, which is now not seen as fixed, but as fragmentary and fluid (Lyon 1987; quoted by Turnau 2014).

On the other hand, both personal and social identity should not be considered to be stable or lasting, because the conditions, the insights and characteristics can change and this can lead to changes in the perceptions of self and identity in the course of time. Thus, the definitions of some conditions and selves change according to the factors mentioned (Baldil 83). In a comparison between modern and postmodern identity, it shows that identity is based in social class while in postmodernism is based from other resources. Modernism relies on families and traditions, while the second type relies on many other options and breakage with the past and traditions, i.e. you create who you want to be (Baldil 84).

Hence, questions of identity created a dilemma back then, it opened a wide wave of new thoughts, notions, culture and way of thinking. It influenced the original citizens and the immigrants both of them. Britain became likely to be more devastated morally and culturally. That is why the period that the wave mentioned happened became unforgettable in the historical life especially that it has affected literature too.

Chapter two:

Era of culture and literature

Chapter two: Era of culture and literature:

2-1 Introduction

2-2 Postmodernism

2-2-1 Postmodern Literature

2-2-2 Strategies and devices in postmodernist writing:

2-3 Conclusion

2-1 Introduction:

What is truth? How can reality be discovered? These questions were mainly asked by investigators so all humanity can understand the world. Until the late of 1960s the worldview espoused by modernity and symbolized by Benjamin Franklin and other modern thinkers who provided acceptable answers. However, the modernity's understanding of the reality that people were seeking to know, has been challenged by postmodernism (Bressler 88). From *International Postmodernism* book:

The last years of the twentieth century, then, would seem to offer an ideal opportunity for taking stock of what, after modernism, has been the second great upheaval in the arts of the twentieth century, an opportunity for getting things right, in the correct perspective (Bertens, Fokkema 3).

After the age of rationality, future obsession and modernity that took time from 1900s till 1960s, political life mainly changed to be more ever-widening circle starting from 1960s. The pop culture, as it was named was the feature of postmodernism. It literally brought a vortex of mixed up ideas and fuzzy science concomitant by different levels of conceptualization. In the flip side, the world became freer concerning all lives' aspects, i.e. no more strict rules nor complex distinctive qualities. In fact, historically speaking after the world war two, things started to shift from positive positions to worst especially for the British Empire. After the devastation of this latter, the need of workers to rebuild the country again costs the middle and upper class their crucial positions. The phenomenon of working class is important than the other classes. Hence the main investigation here, is how this period affects the superpowers countries and what is the reason behind the emergences of contemporary literary theory and criticism?

2-2 Postmodernism:

The term modernism is arduous to define as it has a complicated history across various disciplines. On one hand, the idea of postmodernism emerged in the late 1950s to demonstrate that modernism (the previous movement) has been interrupted and superseded by a modern culture and way

of thinking. At first, it really found its principle purchase in cultural philosophy, architecture, art and literature, yet it has subsequently affected and influenced debates across a wide range of disciplines, such as psychology, politics, history, sociology, law and even the field of medicines and science in general. This latter, made the majority of thinkers in a dilemma, as its concepts has been considered to be one of the intellectual debates That deals with new crucial ideas which basically seen as an emancipation from the institutional straitjacketing of culture, While others criticize the movement because simply they thought it was an abandonment of social and intellectual responsibility especially after the decline of culture and capitalism (Woods).

Postmodernism's initial concern is to de-naturalize the features that modernism had provided in daily life. It believes that the dominated culture is in fact culture made by us not given to us. Hence, this movement basically disqualified when it comes to certain aspects like politics and ideological grounded (Hutcheon 2), especially that it rejects modernity's representation of discourse.

2-2-1 Postmodern Literature:

British literature has not sustained the width and the depth of its early writing style in postmodernism period.in fact, as Damrosch mentioned in his book:

British literature has seen upheavals of aesthetic form, of geographic location, and of linguistic content. What is no longer in question, oddly enough, despite the current age of cyberspace and interactive media, is whether literature itself will survive. As Mark Twain once commented dryly after reading his own obituary in the newspaper: "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated." The reports of literature's inevitable eclipse at the hands of media and mass culture have, it seems, been greatly exaggerated too. At this moment, British literary creativity is fed from many streams, welling up unpredictably, located in unexpected places.

British literature has not merely survived; it remains a vital index of contemporary social and cultural life, and a crucial indication of the shape of things to come (Damrosch 2134).

According to the previous quote literature has faces a change upon the writing style and thought in the early years with the prelude of postmodernism. Nevertheless, Postmodernist literature is a form of literature, emerged in the 1960sin the United States. It is characterized by the use of metafiction, intertextuality, unreliable narration and self-reflexivity. Same as other genre, postmodern literature de-naturalized numerous features of writing style and shifted from talking about reality and rationalism to thematize humanities including historical and political issues. Unlike modern literature, the postmodern one neglects discovering the absolute truth, encourages the acceptance, tolerance and not criticism. As these principles are applied to literary interruption, the postmodernists realizes that there is no correct meaning, in fact it is a knowledge and varied from a reader's interruption to another (Bressler 90).

2-2-2 Strategies and devices in postmodernist writing:

In postmodernism, coherence and difference have been ostracized or at least questioned. This attitude made the postmodernists' writers search for new techniques and devices for their literary works (Bertens, Fokkema 177). Postmodern writing style in general, is characterized by socialism that deals with humanities and politics, no realism, questioning with wide range of answers, flexible visualization of concept and have no criteria for judgment. Overall, according to Charles E. Bressler postmodernism's core characteristics can be stated as follows:

- A skepticism or rejection of grand metanarratives to explain reality.
- The concept of the self as ever-changing.
- No objective reality, but many subjective interpretations.
- Truth as subjective and perspectival, dependent on cultural, social and personal influences.
- No "one correct" concept of ultimate reality.
- No metatheory to explain texts or reality.

- No “one correct’ interpretation of a text.

The early postmodernist texts seem to be detected in all genres including fiction, Drama, as well as poetry in which relies on rewriting and intertextuality. Rewriting basically is a postmodern literary device based on transferring, translating and reformatting the original work and it is mainly used in poetry: “the poem is made up of texts, of fragments of texts, integrated with or without conversion into a new system “(Michael 164). In short, the term refers to the text that is imitated, alluded to and parodied, as the example mentioned by Calinescu, of Nabokov’s rewriting of Edgar Allan Poe’s poem “Annabel Lee” in *Lolita* shows. In addition to this, as well as rewriting, intertextuality is another literary device used by postmodernist’s writers, it refers to the process of creating references to any kind of media texts to another, or shortly is borrowing themes and ideas from other media forms. It is according to *International Postmodernism’s* book, a philosophy that explains the technique and expands it into a word view which emphasizes the role of language or codes instead of texts and messages (Bertens, Fokkema 178). Historically speaking, intertextuality is much older than postmodernism. In fact, it is a phenomenon that has been found in literature ages before postmodernism including its form mainly imitation, parody, travesty, translation, adaptation, quotation and allusion (Bertens, Fokkema 249). However, the new feature about postmodernism intertextuality is the frequency of appearance from the literature of the previous ages. In other words, the more intertextual a literary work is, the more mimetic it will be.

In addition to these characteristics that were used in postmodernist literature, detective narratives including novels, in fact were also crucial and have affected the readers by the use of epistemology and ontological writing (Bertens, Fokkema 201).

2-3 Conclusion:

To sum up, Focusing on literary-cultural production rising up out of or answering the 20th century, extensively understood, 20th century postmodernism grounded in various methodologies that examine and improve the manners in which grasps the artistic societies of the times. This incorporates work thinking about how those societies are bound up with the significant intellectual, social, aesthetic,

political, economics , and environment improvements that have molded the mid twenty-first century. By the use of the literary devices, the reader's response can help to subgenres the questions of identity, reality and knowledge of the world the people are living in starting from that time till the recent days.

Chapter three:

An overview of winters of discontents

Chapter three: An overview of winters of discontents:

3-1 Introduction

3-2 Winters of Discontent

3-2-1 Social life

3-2-2 Articles that were published during the winters of discount

3-2-3 The status of Literature during Winters of Discontent.

3-3 Conclusion

3-1 Introduction:

Every period of the British History was marked by something special. During 1910s, The British Empire was the most powerful, political and economic organization in the world. Years later, it had lost to a marked degree its erstwhile position in the world and absolutely in the dominance of the international affairs. Meanwhile, this lost came from the domination of the other superpower countries and their political changes that had a role in the devastating of the Empire, as well as the crippling effects of the post-war upon the sources of the British wealth. Yet, it failed to keep pace in population and the economic growth which led to search for an immediate solution to keep the Empire (Whelpley 1). Later on, England was in need to rebuild the country thus it welcomed people from its former colonies and gave them citizenship in order to increase the economic position. The period was known as multiculturalism, in which people from different race, religion and color moved from their original country and settled in England as immigrants. Yet, foreigners in fact were quicker to recognize the reality of the recent position of Britain among the entire world than were most of Britons. More or less, the migration statute create a dilemma and it would be wrong to suppose that British society had unaffected by them. Hence, the live of Britons and commonwealth immigrants changed as the government's rule changed. In 1962, the government had passed new strict laws against labor position which concerns commonwealth citizens, and it discussed the right of settlement in the United Kingdom. Such issue, however, created a prelude of an undesirable live for all of Britons, immigrants and politicians (Clarke319-325). This chapter will discuss the period which know by Winters of Discontent.

3-2 Winters of Discontent:

According to the journal article “ Winters of discontent” With the unemployment that faced Britain during 1970s and approached nearly half a million of its citizens, and the prospect of numbers of workless rising to 750.000, Britain faced a chilling winters-economically as well as climatically. Although the monthly warning in the business and political press about the evitable effects of Wilson's success, it has only demonstrated in the last few weeks, with the first major redundancies by the big companies. That the full impact of the situation has begun to be felt. It was In fact, a harsh awakening

for capitalism and its bosses in which they were being assured that the statutory wages freezes. Citizens in the first place considered to be victims of such situation, literally they faced a tough decade full of winters of discontent. This later, is a period characterized by widespread strikes by private and sector trade unions demanding pay rises more than the limits Prime Minister James Callaghan had been imposing.

3-2-1 Social life:



Figure 3.1: British public sector workers went on strike over pay.

In the mid of autumn the weather turned cold on the morning of 25 November when temperatures recorded at Heathrow Airport dropped from 14 °C (57 °F) to 0 °C (32 °F) overnight, with some snowflakes. Throughout most of the following month, the cold lingered, only for temperatures to rise well above 10 °C (50 °F) around Christmas. Citizens by then, faced a lot of difficulties and the effects were more severe outside of London. Roads were also closed because of the strike that workers have done. Meanwhile, most of people had no notion about what to do in such circumstances. Thus, they were choosing to rebel and break away from the gentle, domestic and materialistic way of life promoted by most of the country.

On the flip side, although most of citizens were unemployed because of the prime minister rules, the government was applying sex discrimination in which it refused to hire women even if they disciplined. According to “Life in 1970s Britain “ bush theatre, A serious monetary emergency in the early long stretches of the decade implied mass unemployment for young people and those functioning openly benefits. This set off a colossal number of strikes and dissent walks as worker's guilds battled to agree with a progression of frail legislatures; a multi-day working week was executed in the mid-1970s to preserve power because of modern activity from coal excavators. This distress caused a lot of confrontations with police. In 1970, police appeared to be at an unsurpassed high which caused considerably further partitions in society. Before the decades over, social liberties riots were breaking out across metropolitan regions, generally between the Public Front, and coordinated gatherings of enemies of extremists and against racism councils.

Politically speaking, 1970s Britain was extremely devastated upon the world perceptions, also it touched the society lifestyle, in which fashion was enormous; hairstyles, piercings and short skirts were known as Punk culture which was one avenue of rebellion. Hence, this period also saw a large number of extreme protests such as the bombing campaign as well as terrorism which came only once. This later, demonstrated the harsh socio-economic climate and atmosphere of the 1970s Britain.

3-2-2 articles that were published during the winter of discontent:



WILKINSON
THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

SUPPORT BAKERY WORKERS

By Tom Meddox

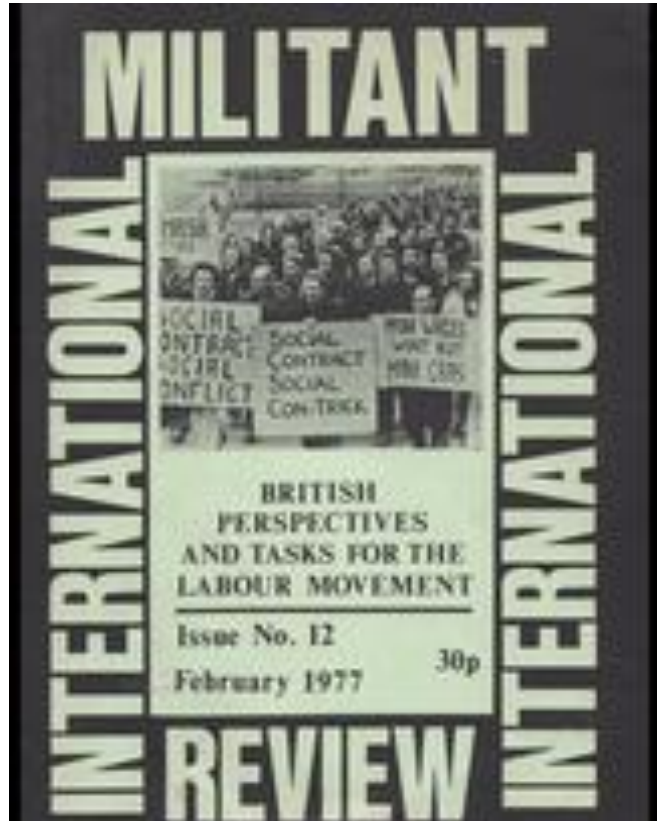
“We have a just claim. Our call goes out to all trade unions for support. Our fight is your fight!”

The General Secretary of the National Union of Bakers (NUB) has written to all trade unions asking for support in the current struggle for a 5% pay rise. The NUB is a small union with only 10,000 members. It is a weak union and it needs the support of all other trade unions to win its fight. The NUB is a just union and it has a just claim. Our call goes out to all trade unions for support. Our fight is your fight!

FORD WORKERS SMASH 5%

EMERGENCY ACTION NOW!





"THERE IS NOTHING TO STOP ANY CITIZEN CROSSING A PICKET LINE IF HE BELIEVED IT RIGHT TO DO SO, I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO DO SO MYSELF" James Callaghan, House of Commons, January 23rd



A group of Tories is working on the details of tough new measures against strikers and pickets...

The 'winter of discontent' - When workers could take no more

On the eve of the general election, the Tory government is expected to announce a package of measures to deal with the 'winter of discontent' - when workers could take no more.

The package is expected to include a new law on picketing, which would make it illegal for picketers to block access to a workplace. It would also give employers the right to sue picketers for damages.

The government is also expected to announce a new law on strikes, which would make it illegal for workers to strike in essential services. It would also give employers the right to sue strikers for damages.

The package is expected to be announced in the next few days. It is expected to be a major test of the government's resolve to deal with the 'winter of discontent'.

6699 The value of the nation's wealth created by the workers has fallen from 20.7% to 15.2%. The poorest half of the population had seen their share fall from 12% to 5.4%.



6699 The number of unemployed has risen from 1.2 million in 1979 to 2.5 million in 1984. They will struggle and struggle hard. They will never give up and surrender. They will be prepared to continue their struggle.

The 'winter of discontent' is a period of social and economic hardship. It is a time when workers are struggling to make ends meet. It is a time when the government is trying to control the situation. It is a time when the people are demanding change.

The 'winter of discontent' is a time of struggle. It is a time when workers are fighting for their rights. It is a time when the government is trying to control the situation. It is a time when the people are demanding change.

The 'winter of discontent' is a time of struggle. It is a time when workers are fighting for their rights. It is a time when the government is trying to control the situation. It is a time when the people are demanding change.



Media had a great impact on the revolution of winters of discontent.

3-2-3 The status of Literature during Winters of Discontent:

In general, history may remember the 1970s as a dark and gloomy period, yet it was also a decade of fascinating social and cultural change. According to Penguin official website of United Kingdom, Literary works characterized by questioning their identity and reality and demonstrating that by the use of lifelike characters. Such as, 1970s become a decade of intense cultural self-reflection known by its notable pioneers like Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, Germaine Greer, Robert Persi and James Herbert. Literature, in fact trod the line between fantasy and reality in way few books had done before. On the other hand, it contains some aspects which most of reviewers consider it as amoral decadence of literature because it mentioned sexuality and homosexuality, alcohol, gothic, breaking the rules, robbery, kidnaping, suicide and much more. Moreover, since the immigration act started in 1971, racism and slavery were highly shown in novels and stories, describing people of color and assault them during the whole decade. Meanwhile, it led to the emergence of black writers mostly Caribbean who were settling in Britain. This manifold variety of writing style between white and black people, is known by transformations of winters of discontent (king73-89).

3-3 Conclusion:

The period of winters of discontent was the most unstable period that the United Kingdom has ever witnessed. Social-politically speaking, the position of life was unsatisfactory while literature can be considered as weird rather than inferior. British writers, in general, know what they are writing according to the conventions of a particular genre. Whereas, they focus on the content rather than the form, or basically they were sharing and spreading the new ideas and way of thinking that they discovered and witnessed during the harsh winters. To put the case in point, pioneers such as James Herbert highly illustrated the effects of 1970s on people, in a horror story full of fiction and gloom. He could use Characters to describe the situation that citizens were living and suffering at during a dark atmosphere with the fear of death. Because of the decrease of economics and the statute of unemployment, Britain lost its prejudice and people lost their label.

Chapter Four:

The Rats 1974 by James Herbert

Chapter Four: The Rats 1974 by James Herbert:

4-1 Introduction

4-2 Author's Biography

4-3 literary analysis of the Novel

4-3-1 plot

4-3-2 characters

4-3-3 Diction and linguistic view

4-4 The issue of identity in the novel.

4-5 Conclusion

4-1 Introduction:

The Rats had a notable success by its publication. The novel dealt with several aspects of postmodernism era specifically during the devastating time winters of discontent. However, James Herbert, the writer, wants to spot the light on the unfortunate situation that former British government had caused by describing and imitating the reality into a plot of story in which symbolic characters were in conflict in. On the other hand, this gothic novel has a specific theme that the author wants to share in a gothic way, only those who can face the rats will understand.

4-2 Author's Biography:



Figure 4.1: The author James Herbert

James Herbert is a British writer, considered to be one of the greatest popular novelists. Widely imitated and hugely influential. Herbert was born in London in April 1943 and passed away in March 2013. He grew up in Petticoat Lane, Whitechapel, in which he studied everything from graphic design to print and photography at the Hornsey College of art. His oppression with art, led him to design all the covers of the books he wrote, however, he later became art director in Charles Barker advertising company. James got married with his wife Eileen in 1967 and had three daughters. Moreover, he has written nearly 23 books, the first one named *The Rats* in 1974 when he was 28 years old, and sold 54 million copies with different languages. His was awarded with ‘Master of Horror’ at the world horror connection, he also received an OBE in the same year for his writing. Most of his books have had television or film adaptations like ‘The Secret of Crickley Hall’ (2012). James Herbert’s work are gripping and they create a real atmosphere in which the characters can be seen in detail, his writing style covers spiritualism, faerie lore, magic, evil and good (Quinlivan).

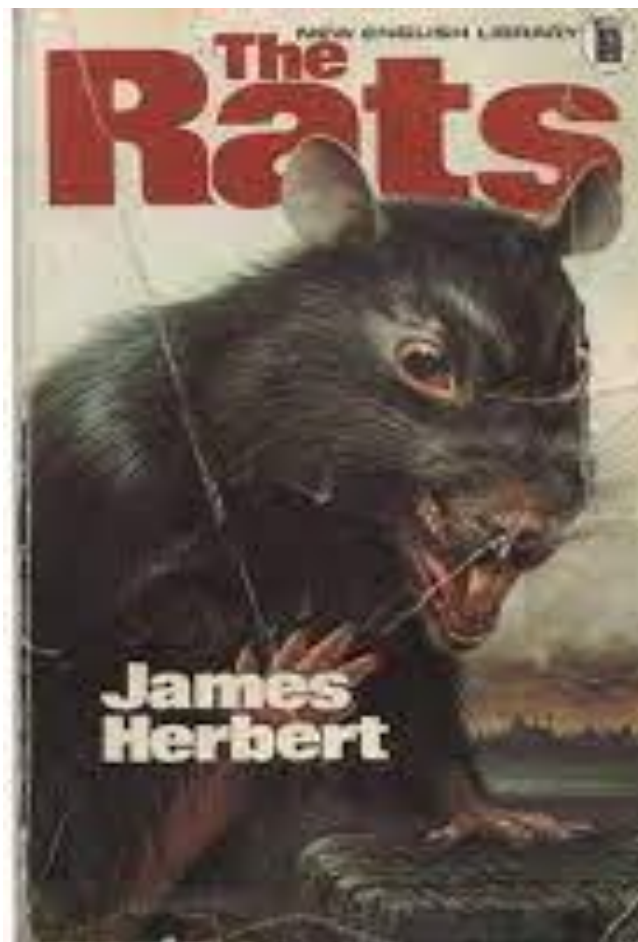


Figure 4.2: The original cover of *The Rats* by James Herbert

4-3 literary analysis of the Novel:

The Rats was an immediate bestseller novel which changed the face of British horror publishing. It was the first novel written by someone who was not yet a novelist. It has been written in 1974 and published after ten months. The novel talks about a horrible attack of rats, menacing all kinds of human beings including children, women young and old people, it starts a bloody war in which evacuation is the only solution (Schepps). Moreover, the author wants to show the lifestyle of 1970s in Britain and how he witnessed a terrible period by narrating a horror events similar to what London and other popular neighborhoods were facing. He in fact, refers to the tragedy of workers and death from hunger as well as congenital degeneration due to the absence of restrictions. The novel takes place London, mostly in the tower blocks and slums, early '70s. It is full of fiction, imagination, symbolism as well as imitation and inspirations which demonstrates the postmodernism characteristics.

4-3-1 plot

In its first genre of literature, the rats seems to have one and full plot from its prelude to the end. The novel did not focus only on the characters themselves, in fact, it was about the period, the situation and how human kinds dealt with the conflict. Rats represents the alien that is strange for people, the first time seen and the first time dealt with although it is part of humans' live (Ratner). However, in a normal day in London, a middle-class art teacher named Mr. Harris noticed that one of his high school students had a wounded and bandaged hand. Yet, elsewhere in London a baby born has been attacked by a horde of giant rats. The baby was killed with a dog, while the mother had only few bites, later was taken to hospital. Suddenly, Mr. Harris who already went to visit his student, met with the lady and recognized the attack that London was witnessed. Later on, the rodents' numbers and confidence increased and the situation turns from bad to worse due to the huge number of victims, then, Harris informed the health ministry about the situation of his student who died from one bite of a rat. It appeared that the rats are handling a form of a disease that kills those infected with it within just twenty-four hours. The ministry later, tries to keep the situation calm, in order to avoid an outright panic. Meanwhile, Harris with an exterminator followed their way down to the canals where they believe the student was attacked, hoping that they will find the giant rats and indeed they reached their

ambitions to find them. Yet, while Harris was contacting the authorities, the exterminator was killed by rats. Furthermore, the attacks became bolder, and involved larger numbers of casualties in each case. It was nothing against 'Black Monday', the day that the high school and subway had been brutally attacked. Mr. Harris figured out that he can kill the rats by fire, but because of its huge quantity, " he stepped through the gap and into the street, climbed tiredly into his car and drove away from the old house" (Herbert 196).

4-3-2 characters:

James Herbert's talent in choosing his characters is highly shown in the novel. He used interesting characters that the reader can empathize with. The hero and the protagonist of the novel Mr., Harris, is a middle-class art teacher, educated and a behaved man who gets involves in a fight with rats. Later, he became more essential when he tries to work with authority. Strict but is not able to deal with his students:

"Here we go again, thought Harris as he trudged down the dusty road to St Michael's

Another bloody week teaching those little sods. Teaching art to little bastards whose

Best work is on lavatory walls. Jesus Christ! He felt the same every Monday"

(Herbert 11).

Mr. Harris is a symbolic character who symbolize to Britons or Britain in general, he appears gently and naïve, yet, finds the giant creators and deals with them. The antagonists are quite not interesting, appear in some pages and get killed by the rats. These flat characters helped the plot to be continued and the events to be done, each one represents and describes one kind of society. Henry Guilfoyle was a great salesman who lost his fortune and became a drunk later. He trained a boy called Francis, yet fell in love and struggled with him. These two characters declared for their homosexuality although they knew they were in danger:

He sat there for half an hour, quietly weeping, he finally realized how

Ridiculous, how pathetic he looked; a middle aged man in love with a young

boy, sitting in a toilet with his trousers round his ankles, crying over words and drawings that understood nothing of his life” (Herbert 6).

. As things changed, they were the first meal of the rats. On the flip side, the author demonstrated homosexuality and social pests that had appeared in London, and got rejected by many by using these characters. Moreover, the female characters were not absent in the novel, in fact the author used at least three main characters in order to highlight the female role at that time. Judy, a flat character represents an educated woman who helped Mr. Harris to fight the rats. Trudy, is a young lady, who thinks only about dating old men and have an intimate relationship.

4-3-3 Diction and linguistic view:

The writer James Herbert, created characters in two kinds of languages: physical language, and mental and moral language. The physical language according to Richard Gill, is convention that when a character is first introduced and gave a detailed presentation of his or her appearance. Mental and moral language is more about how characters think, what they value, possibly, how the reader value them (Gill 18-19). Herbert highly used these techniques especially when presenting a new character. He described his figures carefully and created their jargon of language according to their position. Additionally, the author writing style is really easy, understandable and pleasant to read. He never restrain himself to write a literary novel as it supposed to be, in fact he used a sort of everyday language, mainly the vernacular one. To put the case in point, the following quote is taken from a scene where the author was describing the escape of one of his characters:

He splashed down the corridor, remembering to close the door behind him but opening all the classroom doors to allow the water to flow more freely . He passed the staffroom and thought he heard noises . The basement was the more urgent problem at the moment . That was where he'd seen most of the rats disappear . He had to make sure the door was still firm , maybe shove some more

furniture against it . He could come back and deal with the staffroom door later .

He descended the stairs to the basement, taking care not to slip in the gushing water. He suspected more fire - engines had arrived and the forces outside were using more hoses to completely flood the lower floors. He reached the bottom and waded towards the door. He could hear frantic scraping, scratching. He leaned forward to listen more intently above the noise of the swirling water. Yes, they were trying to scrape their way through the door . He eased the desk back slightly to see what damage they'd done . Christ, cracks were beginning to appear already.

He could hear them gnawing at the wood now. Dropping the desk back he plodded to the storeroom . He looked around. Just the thing, heavy drapes. Old curtains that had been used in the school hall . He dragged them down from the shelf where they'd lain for the best part of a year , ready to be used for the next end - of - term prize - giving . They were heavy, but one would be enough for his purpose

(Herbert113).

On the other hand, as the novel is horrific, James used a terrifying jargon with a harsh words in order to make the reader involved in the story and to create a brutal atmosphere (Danecobain), and this highly shown when he said:

The animals in London zoo had suffered a terribly vicious onslaught, many escaping to the surrounding park and those that couldn't be captured had to be shot. There had been mass individual attacks, people alone having no chance against the over-whelming vermin. Reports had come in throughout the night of destruction and bloodshed (Herbert169-170).

This writing style is one of the postmodernism features that certain writers were using it, such as James Herbert's friend Stephen King.

4-4The issue of identity in the novel:

For no doubt, the United Kingdom was facing crisis of identity after the end of the Empire. Herbert lived in the same period and witnessed how this issue spread in all the country and created a high level of investigation between people. He, in fact, tries to talk about it in his novels and then he had chosen his first novel to express the crisis. In *The Rats*, James chose his novel to be narrated by someone whose identity is concealed until the end of the book, and that was the first sign that the author wants to speak about issue of identity. He let his characters in a conflict between the rats, no matter what was their race or background. The rats which symbolize to the government, attacked all kind of people. Moreover, he forced the readers to think about the rats, everyone ignores it but neglects its benefits in adaptability, ubiquity and their skill at building immunity to virulent pathogens (Liyall). From this latter, the self-questioning started among people back then, and the most asked question that the author raised in his plot is, giant and weird rats are attacking us, who are we?.

4-5Conclusion

James Herbert in his novel *The Rats*, offers a realistic portrayal of a city still recovering from the Blitz some 30 years before, with a bomb site the setting for an early scene. He highlighted the lifestyle during the 1970s and how society was ruined by alcoholic, homosexual, rappers and thief people by the use of symbolism and figurative language. Nevertheless, this best seller horror novel in Britain, represents the life after multiculturalism and the issue of identity. It is in fact a reflection on how the author makes a prompt association between the plague of rodents and the government's failure to run the country in a socially way.

Hence, Herbert wants to narrate his experience during the devastated period and wrote it in a time that literature was not restrained, and this is recognizable in the book. Yet, he neglected some aspects of writing and he chronically mixed up.

General Conclusion

The effects of the Second World War were puissant and lucid upon the British Empire. The British realm has lost its prejudice as well as its position in the world's most powerful countries. The situation was merely hard for the empire and its citizens who struggled to survive in a devastating country. Thus the consequences of this war was huge and it touched every single field of life (Social, political, literary etc...). However, mostly Great Britain was left in a total havoc the homeless and the afflicted were by thousands. Yet, a new challenge had risen which was to make Great Britain on it foot again and bring back the crown to the great empire that once was. A lot of mistakes were done, while the biggest one was winters of discontent.

Britain welcomed people from its former commonwealth colonies in order to rebuild the country, thinking that the more they have labors the more they can bring the empire back. Unfortunately, the government stuck in debt and lost the control on the country, Britain at that time was a shape with no organs. The strikes raised among all works from different classes, no money, and no food thus no life. Moreover, Media had a crucial role in delivering what people were seeking, in the same time it pushed them even to ask for their rights and not to be voiceless. On the other hand, writing was a mean that some literature pioneers resort to. However, the thing is how was their approach to describe and talk about the situation. In fact, most of writers were postmodernists, and all of their works were quite different, they are already citizens and have been affected by winters of discontent. Not only because of the weather and the harsh winter they have lived, but also about the congenital degeneration and the bad habits that have emerged between people back then. Occasionally, James Herbert was one of the notable figures who was and still the best example of British writers that wrote about 1970s. His horror novel, *The Rats 1974* illustrated how people back then lived in a horror and ignorance, not knowing what they were actually living. The novel symbolized to the harsh winters that executed mental and physical health of all people from different ages. Through the use of specific characters, James Herbert could manage to gather literature and civilization in his book.

The last but not the least, the sun that never fall in Britain, became a jangle. For one decade, the country have seen the worst years including harsh winters in all aspects of life. Literary speaking, writing was the only way to escape from reality, they found the pleasure in it while reading a 1970s book. However, all of works have at least implicit meanings or symbolisms about the period,

and the reader have the ability to recognize how the words are not that much suitable or academic enough. Simply, because they already know that writers were focusing on the content not on the form, readers had no response and got influenced by their writing style as it has no restrictions same as the country was.

Bibliography

“Winter of Discontent.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 1, no. 13, 1966, pp. 526–27.

JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4357200>. Accessed 19 Jun. 2022.

Admin. “Life in 1970s Britain.” Bush Theatre, 24 Apr. 2015,

www.bushtheatre.co.uk/bushgreen/life-in1970sbritain/?gclid=CjwKCAjwtcCVBhA0EiwAT1fY7_UWIVnJEa0NhEwwHISkm8X6zXb0EOfRkbj75fHGmOAD8P7W4G6ZxxoC6zcQAvD_BwE.

Austin Ratner. “In Praise of the Great Rats in Literature. Literally.” *Literary Hub*, 9 July

2021, lithub.com/in-praise-of-the-great-rats-in-literature-literally.

Bertens, Hans, and † Fokkema Douwe. *International Postmodernism: Theory and Literary Practice (Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages)*. John Benjamin’s Publishing Company, 1997.

Bressler, Charles. *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice (A Second Printing)*. 5th ed., Pearson, 2011.

Clarke, Peter. *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900–2000, Second Edition (Penguin History of Britain)*. 2nd Revised ed., Penguin Books, 2004.

Damrosch, David, et al. *The Longman Anthology of British Literature, Volume 2C: The Twentieth Century*. 3rd ed., Longman, 2006

Danecobain. "James Herbert – The Fog | Review." DaneCobain.Com | Reviews | Formerly Award-Winning Book Blog SocialBookshelves.Com., 13 May 2021, www.danecobain.com/reviews/james-herbert-the-fog-review

Elliott, A., *The Routledge Companion to Social Theory*, Routledge, New York, 2010

Erlich, V. 1973. Russian Formalism. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34(4), pp. 627–638

King, Bruce. *The Oxford English Literary History: Volume 13: 1948–2000: The Internationalization of English Literature* (Oxford English Literary History, 13). 1st ed., Oxford University Press, 2006.

Gill, Richard. *Mastering English Literature (Macmillan Master Series, 34)*. 3rd ed., Red Globe Press, 2006

Herbert, James, and Neil Gaiman. *The Rats*. Macmillan, 2014.

Lyll, Sarah. "A Terrific New Thriller About a Mysterious Man and Rats. Lots of Rats."

Lyon, David. *The Steeple's Shadow: On the Myths and Realities of Secularization*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987

Penguin. "Books That Defined the 1970s." Penguin UK, 1 Dec. 2020, www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2020/august/books-that-defined-the-1970s.html.

Quinlivan, Janet. "JAMES HERBERT, MASTER OF SUPERNATURAL FICTION." Spooky Isles, 17Apr. 2016, www.spookyisles.com/james-herbert.

Riffaterre, Michael. *Semiotics of Poetry*. 1st ed., Indiana Univ Pr, 1978.

Schlepps0, M. "Eaten Alive: James Herbert's 'Rats' Trilogy." We Are the Mutants, 1 Dec. 2020, wearethemutants.com/2020/12/01/eaten-alive-james-herberts-rats-trilogy.

The New York Times, 22 Apr. 2021, www.nytimes.com/2020/03/19/books/review-red-lotus-chris-bohjalian.html

Whelpley, J. D. "The British Empire." The North American Review, vol. 221, no. 826, 1925, pp. 454–67. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25113398>. Accessed 19 Jun. 2022.

Woods, Tim. "Postmodernism." Oxford Bibliographies, 13 June 2017, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846719/obo-9780199846719-0048.xml>.

"---." Z-Library, booksc.org/book/50459469/c74b98. Accessed 22 June 2022.

.
. .
. .
. .