



GUSHING EMERGENCE OF DISSOLUTENESS IN HUMANITY: A SIMULACRUM IN ONE OF THE SPECULATIVE GENRES OF LITERATURE

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Abstract

The moral values, a person is brought up with as well as his ethical grounding, enables him to be a good human being. This paper examines how writers of different context and cultural background have utilized the different genres of 'Speculative Fiction' in literature to challenge the social, political and cultural norms to present the degradation of the moral values in modern times. The epitome of focus of this research relies on one of the spectacular form of Speculative fiction i.e. 'Dystopian Fiction'. It also explores how some writings are shaped by the critical forces of modernism and post-modernism. The extremes of hallucinations of Post-Modernism heralded the social connectedness. This particular attempt clearly stresses to pen down some serious concerns of modern society highlighted through George Orwell, William Golding and Manjula Padmanabhan's writings. These prominent writers have used their expertise in their respective field to exemplify how the moral values system is on the verge of mortification.

Keywords

Totalitarianism, Loss of moral values, Female oppression, Lack of humanity, etc.

Full Article

Dystopia has been defined in many ways. As the world is associated with the notion of "badness", it becomes a subjective term, whose meaning cannot be viewed in the same way by the two different definers- i.e everybody possesses concept of their own dystopia. The term is very often associated with the fictional works where its definition is narrowed but becomes, in fact, more complicated.

The term dystopia was initially coined and implemented by J.S. Mills in 1868 in the political speech on the state of Ireland, where he used the word in contrast with the term 'Utopia'. The particular declaration as speech strongly opposed the governmental policy on Irish property renouncing that whatever preferably termed to be stupendously heaven and humane as utopia, but their(the government) manifestation termed out to be entirely impracticable

Traditionally, the dystopian was used to describe those literary texts that revolve around a grim futuristic- or at least imaginary- society in which an authoritarian state has taken firm hold of the lives of its citizens. These somewhat ominous tales first rose to prominence near the end of the nineteenth century, when the strong enlightenment faith in the benevolent power of science and ideologies such as socialism began to falter. Troubling works like Darwin's *On the Origins of Species* (1859) which undermines rather than confirmed the exceptional status of human nature, started to appear at a time increasingly marked by disillusion.

This disillusion embarked a transition from utopian literature to the hollowest out perspective. Although, utopian literature imbibed the "possibilities of better human societies in which social, political, and economic problems of the real present have been solved.



The twentieth century critically portrays the versatile perspectives of Literary dystopia. The changing political situations in the world propelled famous writers in different periods to create various these heterogeneous detailed works of fiction. Moylan aptly seems up the backdrop against which some classics were written: “dystopian narrative is largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century. A hundred years of exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, disease, famine, ecocide, depression, debt and the steady depletion of humanity through the buying and selling of everyday life provided more than enough fertile ground for this fictive underside of the utopian imagination.”

The consequences of substantial industrial and scientific upgradation undeniably spurred the pessimism which heralded the world and disdained the utopias. The mockery of the utopian world headed towards alerting clairvoyance of dystopia. The dystopias were on the verge of calling new changes in the society. This vision has prevailed, in fact, until the present with exceptional periods of hope.

While these dystopian accounts have been written forever over a century, they have, in recent years, become increasingly popular. Successful novels such as George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, Margret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Manjula Padmanabhan’s *Escape* portrayed the true nature of the dystopian fictions.

These fictions have presented the decay of moral values in the modern times which led to a far extended study relate to the present concept of the paper. The emphasis of this paper is to dig out the discerning elements to know whether there is any modification in dystopian sensibility. Focusing on its link with cultural and socio-political influences, it presents the modernity with the depleted value system.

Since its origin, dystopian fiction has gone through some significant modifications: the original form developed into a more heterogeneous model, the authoritarian state was gradually replaced by the ruthless enterprises and the protagonist’s rebellion became increasingly successful. Several key aspects, however, remained mostly unaltered. In both the classical and critical accounts, for instance, the ruling powers are primarily concerned with maintaining control and consequently have a rather unhealthy fixation with “the other, the alien and subversive.” The outcasts then regularly serve as targets for licensed acts of violence.

The protagonist’s eventual defeat in these classic narratives usually leads to a trial and often forms the climax. The symbolic confrontation between the central figure and the established society- whether or not represented by a seemingly omnipotent leader- accentuates the central conflict between the reader’s world and the hero’s final punishment. In the later critical expressions this event loses some of its significance, but references to savage executions and other lingering threats of brutality remain present to some degree.

Apart from this latent sense of intimidation, the community’s oppressive nature is also implicitly supported by the herd mentality of its population. Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* was remarkably discussed by Allan Weiss, “dystopian regimes are not so much imposed from above as sought from below.” It was after all the inhabitants’ fears or desires that initially allowed the establishment of a controlling organization. In the face of a crisis or problem, they instinctively chose, “to surrender their freedom willingly to a government or other authority offering them security and freedom from uncertainty, danger, fear, hunger etc.”

Nineteen Eighty-Four has become universally recognized work by George Orwell in which he discussed a society under complete control of its government. Human existence to its every inch was entirely observed and scrutinized by the secret police. The essence of personal freedom loses its existence as the valued phenomena of love, friendship and camaraderie are repressed and negative emotions like hate and fear are exploited. Sex is only a tool for procreation, language is degenerated, war is omnipresent and history is changeable according to the Party’s need. The rule



of the party is unbreakable or as O'Brien explains to Winston in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, "We control life, Winston, at all levels. You are imagining that there is something called human nature which will be outraged by what we do and will turn against us. But we create human nature. Men are infinitely malleable. Or perhaps you have returned to your old idea that the proletarians or the slaves will arise and overthrow us. Put it out of your mind. They are helpless, like the animals. Humanity is the Party. The others are outside- irrelevant" (Orwell, 282).

The dystopian style of Orwell portrays the haunting and grievous state of future and he has a presentiment of portentous highlighting the milieu of the contemporary times. During the decades before the book was written in 1948, Orwell experienced the first hand the inner workings of totalitarian regimes. George Orwell's vivid style of writing, impressive imagery and fervent political convictions connect the readers and astound them into the intense contemplation of the matter in point.

Another writer William Golding used social ideas and historical-religious references in his work *Lord of the Flies*. It is a kind of allegorical microcosm of the world in which desperately he participated. The picturization of the island, the characters (boys) and all the elemental things used in the plot is the blue print of Golding's vision for the world around and somewhere human values present in the British Culture. The focus of the novel tends to trace the problems of society that come from sinful nature of humans. The author wrote the novel to show how political systems cannot govern society effectively without first taking into consideration the defects of human nature.

Lord of the Flies symbolizes the conflict between two human instincts. The first is the impulse to love peacefully by maintaining rules and following principles, and the other instinct aims to gratify personal desire as Jack's action, by the use of violence to get dominance and power. This latter instinct depicted in the central idea of the novel that is savagery versus civilization, chaos against order, rationality against desire, good against evil, and strong belief on God against the beast. The novel begins from the image of a civilized, moral, disciplined behavior and ends with brutality and barbaric life more ever ends with a loss of innocence.

One of the characters in the novel, Piggy, wanted to know what they are going to do on that island while struggling for life. The island is degenerating into anarchy and all he can think about is what the grownups (the boys) are going to do. "What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages? What grownups going to think? Going off-hunting pigs-letting fire out-and now!" (Golding, 113).

After that another important variation which concerns the dystopian writers' attitude i.e. Sexuality. It has always been a rather crucial and yet ambiguous subject in the type of fiction. Depending on the story in question, sexual desires and the behavioral quirks that are associated with it are either portrayed as having a liberating or an oppressive function (Escape), a blend of speculative fiction as dystopian novel and a feminine ideology, roots up in the concern beyond the shackles of patriarchy and oppression. Manjula Padmanabhan incorporated the fiction in a fearful setting, an unnamed government under misogynistic authority where a woman has been swiped off through cloning technology. The heroine *Meiji* and her uncles symbolize secret resistance and strong desire to escape from government tyranny on the part of the modern citizen.

The efforts of her three uncles kept her alive under the dungeons where weapons with sophisticated checking were well established. Her three uncles represented the hidden demur against the omnipotent tyranny. They wanted Meiji to be well nurtured and educated but the task was full of risks. In their conversation, the depiction of horrified life in the tyrannical state was vividly estimated: "That has been the fate of our entire generation", said Eldest. "Inevitability was thrust upon us like a skewer through chunks of meat. We can choose to smile as we're exposed to the fire or we can frown- but nothing we do will alter the nature of the fire or our fate" (Padmanabhan, 148).



The Youngest is her confidant and always supported her in her every sphere of life. Being the only female survivor, it was in the hands of her uncles to protect her and reach a safe destination. When Meiji and the Youngest reached the borders of General's country, they confronted the real dystopian world which was unexplainable. The city carries huge changes under the crown of dictatorship and authoritative government- all over materialism, crime, up surging modern technology and persistent nuclear radiation and of course homosexuality. In such situations, Meiji has to struggle hard to disguise as a man as she is hitting the puberty and the significant changes are going to endanger her survival. The ultimate effort of Youngest is to connect with people of country who dedicate their efforts for the safe escape of women. Meiji feels deeply distressed when Youngest clarifies that she would have to elude on her own. As he quotes, "...I belong to a place that is no longer mentioned outside our borders. That's the price we paid for what was identified by...the United Nations, as the most extreme crime against humanity, our planet has ever yet acknowledged. The very name of our country is deleted from the record of the civilized world. So if they are going to recognize anyone from here, on compassionate grounds, it'll only be you. That's a woman. Not a man. Not any men...you could say it's a kind of reverse justice" (Padmanabhan, 417).

The concept of the whole dystopian novel *Escape* revolves around the evoking realization of the self within and the writer Padmanabhan voiced the exactitude of extremity of unprivileged women of the society which is truly thought provoking.

In short, this study of dystopian fictions bear resemblance to our modern societies at first glance, however, a deeper analysis displayed certain totalitarianism characteristics. On the other side William Golding makes an appeal to the savior side of the human consciousness to recognize the evil as Manjula Padmanabhan alludes about the femininity and the society. *Escape* is in ways an indirect yet scathing indictment of the neo-colonial nature of the Indian government.

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Article Received: 15/06/2025

Article Accepted: 25/06/2025

Published Online: 27/06/2025



**Literary Cognizance: An International Refereed / Peer Reviewed
e - Journal of English Language, Literature & Criticism**
Vol. – VI, Issue-1, June 2025

*To Cite the Article: Verma, Harsh. "Gushing Emergence of Dissoluteness in Humanity: A Simulacrum in one of the Speculative Genres of Literature." *Literary Cognizance: An International Refereed/Peer Reviewed e-Journal of English Language, Literature and Criticism*, Vol.- VI, Issue-1, June, 2025, 202-206. www.literarycognizance.com*

