

Dystopia, Science Fiction and Their Prophetic Power

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Abstract

Science, as a branch of study deals with knowledge in the most systematic, coherent, organized and empirical manner. The truths or the core principles upon which the entire corpus of its knowledge is placed always embrace changes and goes through phases of evolution and revolution and is thus very dynamic in nature. Imagination plays a great part in it as it supplies the fertile mind of the scientific genius with some essential raw ingredients refining which he can take part in the process of creative manipulation of matter and even time. He sees creation as an embodiment of a grand spirit of unity but to decipher the underlying principle of which a scientist needs to start his journey by disintegrating and fragmenting pieces of creation to their ultimate and indivisible building blocks. So far science has not yet been able to arrive at his ultimate aim i.e. to find the most elemental unifying truth governing the entire space-time continuum. He has the power to manipulate time by his enormously influential works which often engender enormous repercussions in the process of generation of all subsequent bits and streams of knowledge in the future field of practice and cultivation of knowledge. This important quality of dynamicity in its adoption, formulation and presentation of ideas owes its existence to another equally impressive and indispensable trait which lies in its staying open to the influence of other branches of study like literature, psychology, history, humanities etc. Scientists often build their theories based on the embryo of one or more hitherto unexplored ideas of any preceding works in a different sphere of knowledge. Science fiction writers belong to such rare breed of creative visionary artists who by their extraordinarily active imaginative prowess often influence the works of even master scientists. The writers of science fiction not only explain and illustrate their futuristic vision about any society or state being guided by some apparently fantastic and mind-boggling

scientific inventions of unimaginable magnitude, they also foreshadow and forewarn the present generation of the dangers or ill-consequences that any indiscriminate use and unscrupulous modification of technological advancement can bring. Thus the sci-fi writers cast a significant influence on the attainment, solidification and development of a new world order, they project it against their monitor of their prophetic power and imagine its effects on the subsequent development of mankind. The aim of this thesis would be to cite few such examples from the works of different science fiction writers belonging to different ages and analyze them to find out how the prophetic elements embedded in their works can be used as forewarnings worthy of paying heed to by doing which we can save ourselves and our society in near or distant future from the possible and ill-consequences of a technologically dominated world order.

Examples of Prophetic Power of the Authors: There are instances when by doing an close research we can find that the visions, ideas or concepts which we often associate with professional scientists mostly for their painstaking efforts in making it applicable and suitable for use in the present generation, were in fact introduced first through the thoughts or ideas of some literary genius of an earlier age. Let us take a look at some examples to see how skilled writers have often introduced germs of some of the most powerful scientific ideas which were later developed to their fullest extent by some genius of science in later times. We shall start by analyzing the works of minor or lesser-known practitioners in this genre and then gradually move towards the discussion of more renowned and famous authors and see how the visionary qualities in their narratives bear some extremely significant implications for the future generation. Science fiction by its very nature is a predictive and prophetic genre. It is not coldly prophetic and superstitious like astrology; neither is it a modified and modernized reenactment of Medieval Fantasies and Fairytales. It is often more potent, more symbolic and more logical than any of those genre. Not all science fiction writers have the accuracy in predicting with minute accuracy all the aspects of any future technological innovation in a detailed and vivid manner so as to provide the technicians and engineers with a solid blueprint like what Arthur C. Clarke did when he predicted the descriptions of communication satellites long before their advent. But the influences of many such speculations and predictions on the future development of any one or more aspects of technological progress are undeniable. Science fictions often incorporate within itself elements from fantasy, horror, mystery and thriller but in a refined manner as if after ionizing

these crude elements off their aura of magic and supernaturalism and then anodizing or galvanizing them with multiple layers of parapsychological and extra-sensory perceptions. The term 'spaceship' came into vogue only after the age of space exploration began, but its roots can be traced back to the year 1880 when in a novel named "Across the Zodiac" author Percy Greg first introduced the possibilities of space explorations and interstellar journey. The book describes how by use of "apergy", a form of anti-gravitational repulsion the narrator makes a flight to Mars in 1830 and it is in this novel that 'Alien Language' was used in writing for the first time. In another novel 'Sinister Barrier' by Eric Frank Russell the then-seemingly fantastical concepts of infrared vision and its implications for human society have been described. Here the protagonist Bill Graham while investigating the deaths of many scientists suddenly discovers that how one Swedish scientist Prof. Peder Bjornsen died just after inventing the means of extending the vision of human being to the far-infrared part of the electromagnetic spectrum. He in fact like many other scientists, was killed by a group of telepathic beings called Vitons who have been on Earth for a long period and whenever any scientist came close to invent something which might help us to see the unseen and thus potentially leading to the discovery of those Vitons they have managed to kill them all. Those Vitons feed upon our electrochemical signals and can cause heart-attack by sucking too hard on human nervous system and its signal transmission process. The novel ends with finding some strategy to destroy Vitons but many remains alive even after waging a war on a global scale against them. The word 'blaster' for the first time appeared in 1930 in the story by an American chemist and writer Nictzin Dyalhis "When the Green Star Waned". This also anticipated the ideas of boosters in rocket and later in missiles.

"... I was holding my Blastor pointing ahead of me; for as I blundered full upon the monstrosity it upheaved its ugly bulk-how I do not know, for I saw no legs nor did it have wings-to one edge and would have flopped down upon me, but instinctively I slid forward the catch on the tiny Blastor, and the foul thing vanished-save for a few fragments of its edges-smitten into nothingness by the vibration hurled forth from that powerful little disintegrator."

The actual concept and idea of cloning as we now know them also arrived on the stage long back in 1970 with the publication of "Future Shock" by Alvin Toffler. He used the term clone to designate an "artificial copy of man". Before that the term was used to mean branch or part of something especially in the fields of Botany as the Greek word 'klon' to which this English word owes its origin translates as 'branch'.

Rober Ettinger, the founder and the father of ‘cryonics’ got the idea about this process from reading a short story in his childhood and although in 1965 a New York industrial designer named Karl Werner coined the word "cryonics" to refer to the artificial process of freezing a human body, it is in the story *The Jameson Satellite* (1931) by Neil R. Jones that the concept of cryonics was first introduced. The story centers round one Professor Jameson who decides that after his death his body should be placed in a spaceship in orbit around the Earth so as to preserve it from decaying. He equips it with a Radium-powered source and when after 40 million years a starship of the Zoromes comes into the solar system they rescue the head of Prof. Jameson and makes it to speak out all his past history. The Earth has turned into a dying planet with Sun getting bigger and bigger turning into a Red Giant and finally the modified Prof. Jameson whose head has been placed inside another robotic body realizes the pains of tolerating mortality and decides to die but later changes his mind and embarks on a grand interstellar voyage with the Zoromes for exploring the Universe further.

Also it is after the publication of the novel by John Campbell "Space Island" in 1931 that the term ‘Force Field’ comes to be used widely to describe some sort of electromagnetic type of field or a sphere of influence of any force.

The word ‘Multiverse’ in fact is used first by American philosopher William James and it is with the publication of Michael Moorcock's work in *Science Fiction Adventures* that the word ‘Multiverse’ finally derives its modern meaning to refer to a creation or reality consisting of many universes.

The words ‘telekinesis’, ‘teletsthesia’ and ‘telepathy’ have all been coined and first used by poet and writer Frederick W. Myers in 1882. Similarly the concept of inexplicable movement of things associated with the term ‘Teleportation’ which is in fact used to denote a ‘feat of making an object or person disintegrate in one place while a perfect replica appears somewhere else’ also has its origins in the work named “Lo!” by Charles Fort.

The word ‘Cyberspace’ finds its first usage in 1982 in the short story “The Burning Chrome” by William Gibson who’s another and more important work “Neuromancer” describes it much more extensively and elaborately. “Cyberspace,” he says is a “consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts... A graphic representation of data abstracted from banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding...”

In the later sections we shall be discussing more in details the ‘Dystopian’ and ‘Utopian’ or the ‘Ustopian’(as Margaret Atwood would like to call many works of science fiction because, in her view, “each” of those works “contains a latent version of the other”) aspects of many great works and their prophetic qualities among which Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein”, Ray Bradbury’s “Fahrenheit – 451”, George Orwell’s “1984” and “Animal Farm”, Stephen King and Richard Bachman’s “The Running Man”, Zamaytin’s “We”, Octavia Butler’s “Parable Of The Sower”, Wells’ “The Sleeper Awakes” and “The Time Machine”, Margaret Atwood’s “The Handmaid’s Tale”, Vladimir Nabokov’s “Invitation TO A Beheading”, William Nolan and G.C. Johnson’s “Logan’s Run” and Gibson’s “Neuromancer” are few on which special emphasis would be placed.

Dystopia in Science Fiction and Its Focus on Individual’s Struggle: A.J. Darkholme in ‘Rise of the Morningstar’ writes: “You don’t have to keep living in a dystopia simply because you’re strong and noble enough to accept it.” Dystopia, Kakotopia or Anti-Utopia points to a generally futuristic society or community where things undesirable or frightening rule the roost and individuals suffer under the authoritative repressive rule of a totalitarian government. The following words of Ray Bradbury from ‘Fahrenheit 451’ sums up the very essence of a dystopian society and the deplorable condition in which the common people are forced to lead their lives: “Ask no guarantees, ask for no security, there never was such an animal. And if there were, it would be related to the great sloth which hangs upside down in a tree all day, every day, sleeping its life away.” The dystopian novels often portray the struggle of an individual to free him from the dehumanizing and demoralizing influence of the repressive regime. One of the earliest examples of expressing the author’s concern about the dangers of taking science too far lies in Mary Shelley’s immortal work ‘Frankenstein’. The novel itself reflects the changing attitude towards science during the second-half of 19th Century when Science gradually ceased to be looked upon as ‘Natural Philosophy’. In Shelley’s story Victor Frankenstein was initially lured by the promises of magical science or alchemy which intended to turn base metals into gold and find the elixir of life. But it was Victor’s Chemistry Professor who redirected his attention towards the more pragmatic and practical experimentations of modern-day science which focused on more tangible issues of life and nature. This changing attitude towards science is reflected very powerfully in the words of Victor Frankenstein himself when he said "the ancient teachers of this science promised impossibilities, and performed nothing. The modern masters promise very little

they know that metals cannot be transmuted, and that the elixir of life is a chimera. But these philosophers, whose hands seem only made to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pore over the microscope or crucible, have indeed performed miracles. They penetrate into the recesses of nature, and show how she works in her hiding places. They ascend into the heavens: they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe. They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows" (Frankenstein, Chapter 3).

There are innumerable instances when the writers of science fiction often faithfully records the changing, evolving, emerging or decaying roles of various institutions and aspects of human life or foresees such patterns of change in a futuristic evolving version of human civilization. As Zamaytin has recorded in his novel 'We' the role of gradually deteriorating, hollow spirituality and sham religion in the lives of men: "Our gods are here below, with us, in the Bureau, in the kitchen, in the shop, in the toilet. Gods have become like us, ergo, we have become like gods. And to you, my unknown planetary readers, we will come to you, to make your life as divinely rational and exact as ours."

This novel of hers initiated an entire tradition of portraying in a most fruitful prophetic manner the dangerous consequences of unbridled use of scientific knowledge and its abuse which accelerate the society's downfall and degeneration towards a totalitarian dystopian regime. Following this glorious tradition Arthur C. Clarke imagined in 1958 in a story named The City and The Stars. Edward Bellamy in 1888 envisaged the prototype of what we now call credit cards and Jules Verne in 1865 envisaged landing on the moon. The concept of genetic engineering was imagined first in Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" in 1932 while Stanislaw Lem in as early as 1961 pointed towards the possibilities of e-books. The experiments on cloaking devices and stealth technology found first mention back in the days of H.G. Wells in 1897 in his work "The Invisible Man". In 'Frankenstein' Mary Shelley has attributed a quote to Sir Isaac Newton: 'I was like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.' But masters of science fiction are not merely content with portraying only the omnipotence of science and man's helplessness against the forces that these epoch-making discoveries make him to bow down to, rather the authors often portray the fighting, rebellious spirit of the individuals who

engage in various battle against these mighty powers. In Ray Bradbury's "Fahrenheit – 451" Guy Montag, the fireman becomes the dominant symbol of struggle against the ruling power and later becomes the representative of the Biblical Book of Ecclesiastes by memorizing it as any written or printed material was ordered to be burnt; in Huxley's 'Brave New World' John, the savage hero who is rejected by both the 'savage' Indian culture and the 'civilized' World State Culture becomes the force of resistance against the World State and is later forced to embrace martyrdom as a result of an unbearable stain that arises out of the vast difference between his humanistic values and the real dehumanizing values of the World State; Ben Richards, the contestant in the reality show and the declared enemy of the state in Stephen King and Richard Bachman's 'The Running Man', I-330 in Zamaytin's 'We', Lauren Olamia in Octavia Butler's 'Parable Of The Sower', Graham in Wells' "The Sleeper Awakes", Offred in Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale", Logan – 3 in Willam Nolan's "Logan's Run", Cincinnatus C. in Nabokov's "Invitation to a Beheading", Henry Dorsett Case in William Gibson's "Neuromancer" are some examples of protagonists who are different from traditional heroes or even belong to the class of anti-heroes and often blur the distinction between a true hero and a anti-hero. They all rebel at one time or the other against the totalitarian tendencies that try to exterminate the last surviving qualities of human nature and they are different from the rest but most of them end up being martyrs to the merciless power of the ruling authority. Ben Richards in Stephen King's 'The Running Man' is a man blacklisted by the Government for allegedly harboring tendencies to disagree with the authority of the totalitarian state. He participates in 'the Running Man' show even while knowing very well that his chances of surviving the race is very thin. Here the consequences of total state control and an all-pervasive corruption of the power in its highest form is depicted. The author writes, "In the year 2025, the best men don't run for president, they run for their lives. . . ." Now in the novel towards the latter half of the story when after killing Lead Hunter Ewan McCone Ben is offered the job of taking his place he accepts it only to revenge the unpardonable wrongs committed by the Network authorities when they killed his wife and daughter. He succeeds in destroying the network by crashing a plane into its headquarters but not without killing himself in the process. In Nolan and Johnson's novel 'Logan's Run' the action takes place in the dystopian world of 2116, when a person's maximum age is strictly legislated by which one is allowed to live only up to twenty one years. Logan 3 starts a *Deep Sleep Operative* (also called *Sandman*) whose main job is to

eliminate those who try to escape their fate as ordained by the State but later transforms into a Runner himself when he tries to infiltrate an underground railroad for runners seeking sanctuary where they can live in defiance to the rules of the state. Thus the traditional dividing line between a hero and an anti-hero gets blurred while analyzing the characters like Logan 3 in science fiction. In Orwell's "1984" the dangers of totalitarian government have been depicted like never before. The various means of psychological, social, political manipulation by which the citizens are continuously controlled, regulated, manipulated, deceived and maintained like objects with no independent will are described with an unmatched artistry throughout the novel. These are evident especially in the images of omnipresent signs reading "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU," and by various other ways like by controlling the present history and thus distorting the past, by means of hidden telescreens and microphones across the entire city, by using the Party's own highly manipulative language 'Newspeak' by which the individual's capacity to conceptualize anything that might go against the government are nipped in the bud and by employing large-scale psychological manipulation through 'Doublethink' through which the individuals are forced to hold two contradictory facts in his mind. Here Winston Smith is tricked by O'Brien to reveal his fascination for the anti-government campaign of the Brotherhood and is tortured, conditioned and finally reshaped in a broken, maimed and mangled form to suit into the society. This type of refashioning, restructuring and breaking down an individual to make him a mechanical being which is devoid of any spirit of creative self-expression, spirit of inquiry and defiance against established order finds expression in Zamyatin's 'We'. In 'We' the protagonist of the novel is D-503 who is the chief engineer of the project which is being built to conquer extra-terrestrial planets. D-503 is shown to be undergoing the "Great Operation", which is ordered by the One State to all its citizens in order to prevent possible riots by bombarding specific parts of the brain with X-Rays which will take away one's will of independent thinking and one will be reduced to a state of mechanical 'reliability'. According to Mihailescu, Zamyatin should be credited with the establishment of dystopia as a genre and setting the "ontological" issue of eventfulness which has helped in later period writers like Huxley and Orwell to build their empire based upon that basic concept of dystopia as a world different from utopia by its virtue of harboring eventful episodes. In 'We', D-503 starts as a utopian character and realizes that there are two forces in the world namely, Entropy and Energy. Entropy helps one to arrive at quietude and establish

equilibrium while energy impels one to follow the path of eventfulness by breaking the state of equilibrium and quietude. D -503 decides to follow the ‘energetic’ path and comes in conflict with One State only to be punished with the erasing of his “centre of feelings and imagination.” Science fiction and dystopian works also rely upon the exposition and elaboration of such tension which takes shape out of conflict between two types of force or ways of leading life – one is the state of passive acquiescence and submission to the ruling power and another is active rebellion against a long-established but corrupt regime.

In Octavia Butler’s ‘Parable of the Sower’ the protagonist Lauren Olamia is shown as having a gift of hyper-empathy whereby she is able to feel other’s pain, pleasures, sorrows as if they were her own. In Margaret Atwood’s ‘the Handmaid’s Tale’ the question whether to hold the female protagonist Offred as a valiant rebel challenging the ruling power’s oppressive and exploitative regime or a helpless victim of Gilead’s oppression or an unwilling unfortunate passive participant in the regime’s rule is a very challenging one. We can get a clear picture about the socio-political background against which the action of the novel is brought to life in the following words of Atwood: “That was when they suspended the Constitution. They said it would be temporary. There wasn’t even any rioting in the streets. People stayed home at night, watching television, looking for some direction. There wasn’t even an enemy you could put your finger on.” This novel again points towards the problem of plain categorization and labeling of characters as heroes/heroines or villains/anti-heroes in science fiction and dystopian novels. In ‘Handmaid’s Tale’ it is the language primarily which is used by Offred that gives her claim to the title of a valiant heroine in the novel. She records her experience in a manner which marks her out of others by sheer virtue of her command and mastery over this primary form of human expression: “I sink down into my body as into a swamp, fenland, where only I know the footing.... I’m a cloud, congealed around a central object, the shape of a pear, which is hard and more real than I am and glows red within its translucent wrapping. Inside it is a space, huge as the sky at night and dark and curved like that, though black-red rather than black.”

In Nabokov’s ‘Invitation to a Beheading’ the protagonist Cincinnatus C. is shown to be a peculiar character distinct in its own way from the common race of people who are transparent, hollow and open to the rays or visions of others. But Cincinnatus stands as an obstacle, a dark form who is impervious, opaque to the rays of others and can not be easily

read and he too dies a martyr believing that the true 'reality' lies in the world after death where he will join the spirits of the visionaries.

Some Other Major Themes and Their Implications in Science Fiction: We have already discussed how science fiction and dystopian novels often stand testimony to its power of presenting the audience with a third eye to envisage the time to come while often offering some alternative to choose in the way. Robert Heinlein in 'Solution Unsatisfactory' has forewarned us of the dangers of an arm-race and the potential dangers of Cold War. In this short story U.S. builds a super nuclear weapon which goads all other nations to start making their own bombs thereby raising themselves to the status of a superpower nation. This results in Cold war and an endless arm-race. Though the story did not use the concept of fission or fusion in making nuclear weapons but relied on some sort of radioisotope dust weapon it accurately predicted many aspects of developments of nuclear arms and their immense dangers.

In 'A Clockwork Orange' Anthony Burgess first introduces the concept of music therapy for treating many psychological disorders which has been later used in many occasions for treating victims and perpetrators of crimes. Jules Verne in 'From Earth To The Moon' has successfully predicted in as early as 1865 many issues like weight, size, duration and mass of the capsule and weightlessness. Orwell in 1949 in his revolutionary novel '1984' forewarns us of usefulness and dangers lurking in the excessive use of security and surveillance cameras. H.G. Wells has already presented his readers in 1914 with the dangers of an atomic explosion in his work 'The World Set Free' and this was 30 years before 1945 bombings on Hiroshima-Nagasaki. E.M. Forster in 1909 in his short story 'The Machine Stops' predicts the dangers of submerging ourselves in the world of internet, simulated wish-fulfillments and virtual relationships which in turn will threaten our real world skills of communication, shorten our attention span and make the real world appear slow, dull and monotonous. This is what is exactly happening today to millions of youths around the globe. Forster once warned us about the dangers of our ever-increasing dependence upon technology in accomplishing our aims and executing various tasks: "But Humanity, in its desire for comfort, had overreached itself. It had exploited the riches of nature too far. Quietly and complacently, it was sinking into decadence, and progress had come to mean the progress of the Machine."

One important aspect which most of these novels rely upon and emphasize and elaborate is the power of language in determining the extent of freedom that human mind is capable of

enjoying for himself and his society. The language is depicted to have the power of giving tongue to some of most powerful feelings and independent, rational thinking which if allowed to get expressed in an unfettered manner can even usher in an age of revolution. As we can see in 'The Handmaid's Tale' offered uses the language to express herself, to write her narrative, to retain her memories and to reconstruct and transform the reality in order to overcome the effects that the oppressive designs of the regime cast upon human beings. Another important aspect that almost all these great works of science fiction emphasize upon is the power of memories and the power to dream. The memories hold the key to the past and in any case if any disagreement or conflict arises between the experiences and impression of an individual he can try to reconstruct and reorganize his pattern of thought most reliably by getting access to his memories and past events. Thus Republic of Gilead in 'The Handmaid's Tale', White Council in 'The Sleeper Awakes', Big Brother and Doublethink in '1984', Mustapha Mond and The World State in Huxley's 'Brave New World', Squealer, a clever pig and mouthpiece of Napoleon and Minister of Propaganda in 'Animal Farm', One State in Yevgeny Zamyatin's 'We', Sleepshop in 'Logan's Run' all try to impose maximum control upon the memories, language and thought process of its subjects. On the other hand there stands a group of people or some secret underground organization that are declared enemies of the state power whose main aim is to fight for the freedom of mankind. The Book People in 'Fahrenheit – 451', Mephi in 'We', Brotherhood in '1984', Mayday in 'The Handmaid's Tale', Runners in 'Logan's Run' are some famous examples of groups or organizations whose chief aim is always to threaten, subvert and ultimately overthrow the oppressive regime. The main characters though are often portrayed as helpless, powerless victims of the extremely powerful state yet are never devoid of individuality, uniqueness and a charm of their own. Critics like Reneta Galtseva, Irene Rodnyansky have tried to establish the viewpoint that the individual's role and his struggle for free will form an important motif in many dystopian novels of special significance. Critics like John Harrington and Theodore Dalrymple have compared the works based on utopian and dystopian themes to bring out the essential points of similarities and differences between those two types of science fiction. Criss Jami points out the impossibility of maintaining a water-tight compartmentalization between dystopian and utopian type of writings. He states: "A utopian system, when established by men, is likely to be synonymous with a dystopian depression." It is hard to say whether all dystopian novels essentially and necessarily belong to the science fiction category

but the trend of both utopia and dystopia demand inclusion of elements of hard and soft science fiction. Critics like Gorman Beauchamp, Donald Wyatt and Donald Hughes have tried to point out the role of technology especially the one which gone awry and is trying to destroy individual freedom. According to them this aspect of technology from time and time have played an indispensable role and served as a recurrent motif in many of the great works by masters of sci-fi writing. They have pointed out the difference between two frequently used terms in science fiction narratives – technophobe and technophile. According to them, a technophobe believes that technology has the power to overpower, transform or transcend its original creator and can usher in unforeseen events whereas a technophile loves technology for its own sake and believes it to be merely an instrument under man’s control and it it’s up to man whether to use it for the good or bad of mankind. One of Jacques Ellal’s statements very brilliantly sums up the magnitude to which the technology can spread its tentacles to take various aspects of human life in its grasp: “Technique has taken over the whole of civilization. Death, procreation, birth all submit to technical efficiency and systemization.” Calin Andrei Mihailescu has pointed out how the really great sci fi narratives are often works of true art where the artist creates a sense of reality by balancing recognizable and easily comprehensible everyday details with mystical elements of telepathy, robots, androids, bionics, futuristic war, time travel and finally the power of human will. Karen Stein, Kathryn Grossman and Elezabeth Mahoney have worked on the fields of pointing out the role played by the female characters in science fiction thus providing a whole new feminist perspective with which to analyze the science fiction and dystopian literature. In ‘The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature’ M. Keith Booker has attempted to analyze science fiction narratives as fictions of social criticism while in ‘Scraps of Untamed Sky: Science Fiction, Dystopia, Utopia’ author Tom Moylan views dystopian works as essentially the products of man’s twentieth century terrors.

Conclusion: The power and potential of Science Fiction as a genre to explore the various issues related to psychological, social, cultural, political life of man are immense. One of its eyes always points towards the unexplored realms of futurity while another stays firmly fixed on the space-time of present generation. By its inherent prophetic power it does not merely portray the shape of things to come rather it presents us with some invaluable alternatives choosing wisely from which we can arrive at some satisfactory solution of our own problems. Science fiction often poses some very deep and fundamental questions to us, e.g. Anthony

Burgess in “A Clockwork Orange” asks “Is it better for a man to have chosen evil than to have good imposed upon him?” Also science fiction often speculates intensely on the problems and prospects of different type of governmental systems and social and political institutions and provides valuable commentary on them as for example George Orwell in ‘1984’ writes, “It was possible, no doubt, to imagine a society in which wealth, in the sense of personal possessions and luxuries, should be evenly distributed, while power remained in the hands of a small privileged caste. But in practice such a society could not long remain stable. For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realise that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance.” Science fiction thus always ardently advocates for free expression of thought and creative spirit in human beings and seeks to provide us with a hope for a really bright, jubilant and vivacious brave new world. Borrowing Zamaytin’s words from ‘We’ we can conclude our discussion about the significance and the role played by it in teaching us about some fundamental truths of life: “Understand this: Only the four rules of arithmetic are unalterable and everlasting. And only that moral system built on the four rules will prevail as great, unalterable, and everlasting. That is the ultimate wisdom. That is the summit of the pyramid up which people, read and sweating, kicking and panting, have scrambled for centuries. And looking down from this summit to the bottom, we see the remains in us of our savage ancestors seething like wretched worms.”

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