Unravelling Dystopia in *Dreams of Resurrection*: Searching for Meaning Amid Chaos

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Abstract

Amidst the global COVID-19 epidemic, there has been a growing surge in the popularity of dystopian literature, notably in the Arab world. This analysis delves into a unique piece of this literature, Ahlam Al Qeyamah (2018) by Egyptian writer Mohammad Gamal, translated as Dreams of Resurrection and released in 2021. This paper not only explores the dystopian characteristics included in the novel and their connection to the pandemic but also highlights the unique narrative style and thematic elements that set this work apart. The novel, which ignited substantial controversy in the Arab world, portrays a virus spreading in Egypt via tourists at an international airport. Gamal's narrative delves into the intricacies of a dystopian society, gradually unveiling its depths as the novel progresses. This paper presents the characteristics of classic dystopian writing as a structure for examination and offers a concise summary of the genre's evolution in Arabic literature. The discourse emphasizes shared components and discerns specific themes in *Dreams of Resurrection*. The results suggest that the work conforms to Erika Gottlieb's defining characteristics of dystopian literature, clearly placing it within the category. Furthermore, this interpretation emphasizes that dystopian literature does not support senseless suffering but instead aims to discover significance in a world devoid of meaning and to provide purpose among disorder.

Keywords: dystopia, dystopia characteristics, Erika Gottlieb

1. Introduction

The surge in the popularity of dystopian literature during the coronavirus pandemic, both on a worldwide scale and specifically within the Arab world, underscores the genre's global significance and influence. On a worldwide scale, dystopian literature has evolved as a genre, adapting to the changing times. George Orwell's *1984* was one of the first dystopian novels published in 1949 to gain popularity, and it is still one of the best-selling dystopian novels today. The popularity of dystopian fiction has recently increased, and readers are more interested in themes still valid in current times, such as surveillance, power, and control. Many dystopian novels have been adapted into popular films that have grossed millions of dollars, such as *The Hunger Games* (2012) and *Oblivion* (2013). These novels have a distinct personality, making them enormously appealing to readers and well-known in today's culture. These works exhibit common elements of dystopian fiction where its protagonists are always young and uphold ideas of justice and honesty while resisting the dictates of an oppressive society instituted by adults.

Dystopian fiction depicts alternative world situations that are darker and more horrific than the current societal order. Under literary dystopias, oppression is an effective way of restricting individual freedom and managing individuals in a totalitarian regime that tries to keep its authority by denying residents certain rights, such as freedom of speech, travel, reading, and education. Nevertheless, there is a notable deficiency in the scholarly examination of Arabic dystopian literature, namely in its ability to depict and analyze current socioeconomic problems accurately. Although dystopian tales have been extensively examined in Western settings, their equivalents in Arabic literature have not received equivalent academic scrutiny. Whether this constitutes something completely new remains debatable; hence, it is particularly relevant considering the recent increase in Arabic dystopian literature, a significant portion of which is written by Egyptian authors.

Many of the dozen or so Arabic dystopian writings released during the 21st century have been written in English or French, according to Barbra Bakker. Most Arabic literature has been translated into English rapidly, which is unique. The lengthier and more comprehensive Western literary heritage of dystopian storytelling may have prompted writers and publishers to want to enter the Anglophone market. Notably, Dystopian fiction is portrayed as a new literary trend in Arabic literature that emerged mainly in the 21st century. Writers of Arabic literature seldom utilized dystopia to criticize their societies or politics; 'authors have usually opted for other devices, such as realism, symbolism and surrealism' (Allen, 1995, p. 65). This research paper dwells upon the common characteristics of dystopian fiction in *Dreams of Resurrection* (2021), a novel by Mohammad Gamal. To achieve that goal, the research will present an overview of the definition and origin of Dystopian Literature and later define the generic characteristics of the genre by utilizing the theories of Erika

Gottlieb as illustrated in her book *Dystopian Fiction East and West Universe of Terror and Trial* (2001). Gottlieb (1938-2007) is a recognized Canadian literary critic; she worked as a teaching assistant in many Canadian and European countries. Gottlieb showed great interest in literary criticism and history and wrote three essential reference books and many published articles about the same genre (*Gottlieb, Erika (Simon) | Encyclopedia.com*, n.d.).

The researcher purposefully chose a Western-oriented theoretical approach concerning Arabic dystopian fiction; this decision is inspired by two reasons: the fact that dystopian fiction was born as a genre in the Western literary tradition, in addition to the absence of extensive research, and as a result, an equivalent categorization in the field of Arabic literary criticism. This study aims to fill the gap by examining the dystopian characteristics in *Dreams of Resurrection* using Erika Gottlieb's views on dystopian literature as a framework. The study seeks to clarify the specific characteristics that constitute dystopian literature in this work and to enhance the overall comprehension of Arabic dystopian fiction. This study will also examine the broader phenomenon of growing fascination with dystopian narratives within the pandemic, emphasizing how these tales critically analyze social problems and explore the need for significance and direction in times of turmoil and disarray. The following discourse delineates prevalent motifs and distinctive components about this piece. It raises several contemplations on its essence as a literary dystopia by conventional delineations of dystopian literature. This research highlights the need for a distinctive Arabic, particularly Egyptian, interpretation of dystopian literature to have a deeper understanding and greater appreciation for the distinct contributions made by Arabic/Egyptian dystopian tales.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 What is a Dystopia?

There are variant definitions for the dystopian genre that mainly flourished in nineteenth-century literature and grew primarily as a critique and an opposition to utopian fiction. Claeys claims that the reason that Dystopia blossomed at that time resulted from perceiving the progress in industrialization and socialism as a threat to humanity (Claeys, 2017, p. 355). The word dystopia may be translated from Greek as "bad place," it typically refers to a society with an idealized structure but at least one potentially harmful fault. According to the *New World Encyclopedia*, a dystopia is the vision of a society that is the opposite of a utopia. 'A dystopian society is one in which the conditions of life are despondent, characterized by human misery, poverty, oppression, violence, disease, and/or pollution.' One of the most popular definitions for Dystopia is Sargent's, who specified that Dystopia is "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which the reader lived" (Sargent, 2016).

On the other hand, in his book *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research Guide*, Booker argues that 20th-century dystopian fiction presents criticism for political regimes and their manipulation of their citizens, but at the same time, he disagrees with defining dystopias as the opposite of utopias, he explains that 'since a characteristic which is identified as utopian in one work can be the cause of a dystopian result in another.' (Booker, 1994, p.3-4) However, in his book *The Origins of Dystopia,* Claeys explains that the term Dystopia grew to be used in the 20th century to describe a fictional society with social or political negative traits or as a satire of a utopian society (Claeys, 2010, p. 107)

Today's dystopian literature still draws on many of the same topics; however, some new ones have evolved because of societal change. Air pollution, deadly viruses, obesity, and global warming are issues that have lately received a great deal of attention and led to an increase in humankind's self-criticism, 'the addition of perceptible global warming to the list of the world's political problems and the drastic exaggeration of individual anxieties about obesity played a major role in switching the emphasis of popular rhetoric to the magnification of individual responsibility and the careful cultivation of an individual sense of ecological sin' (Claeys, 2010). Accordingly, suggestions that earlier dystopian visions are now being progressively realized are becoming increasingly prevalent.

In his book, "The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism," Booker argues that "defamiliarization" is a key element in dystopian works. He explains that by setting their critiques of society in distant places or times, dystopian fictions offer new viewpoints on problematic social and political practices often overlooked or considered normal and unavoidable. This viewpoint corresponds to the rise of dystopian literature in the Arab world during the early 21st century, which mirrors notable social and political advancements

Over the last several years, there has been a notable increase in dystopian writing in the Arab world, which mirrors the changes in politics and society. Prominent literary works such as "The Queue" by Basma Abd al-Aziz illustrate this tendency and the "Iraq +100" collection compiled by Hassam Blasim. These novels explore tyranny, control, and the gradual loss of individual liberties, reflecting the wider backdrop of modern Arab countries. Bakker is adamant that the distinguishing feature of Arabic dystopian literature, in contrast to its Western equivalents, is its emphasis on the rulers' pursuit of self-interest and their use of religion and bureaucracy as control instruments. Western dystopias often scrutinize liberal societies and excessive corporate influence, but Arabic dystopian tales highlight the suppression of human liberties by fundamentalist theocracies and secular dictatorships. This change in emphasis offers a distinctive perspective to analyze the social and political challenges confronting the Arab world today (Alter, 2016).

Arabian science fiction books set in the future commonly portray failing utopias in the late 20th century. These paintings are debated as social and political critiques or adaptations to difficult conditions. Mounzer, in her article "Apocalypse Now: Why Arab Authors Are Really Writing About the End of the World," says, "Arab writers, disillusioned by the failures of the Arab Spring and the renewed plunge into disorder and authoritarianism, have spawned a new literary movement of late, turning to speculative fiction—dystopian in particular—to

make sense of the nightmarish present."

3. Research Methodology

The methods selected for the current study are Comparative and Analytical Approaches. The paper incorporates Gottlieb's theory about dystopia to understand the behaviors of different characters and prove that dystopian characteristics exist in the selected narrative. The method is appropriate for the present study.

4. Gottlieb's Dystopian Characteristics

In her book *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial,* literary critic Erika Gottlieb provides an intensive analysis of about thirty literary works produced in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe between 1920 and 1989. The importance of her work is derived from the fact that she was able to provide a comprehensive critical analysis of totalitarian governments that existed in Eastern Europe and that need to be more familiar to readers of literary works around the world, mainly in Western Europe and the United States. Her work goes beyond presenting a simple summary of selected texts but as a historical and cultural record and excellent reference work related to the dystopian genre.

In the first chapter of her book *Dystopia West, Dystopia East*, Gottlieb claims that dystopian fiction "is a post-Christian genre" and that the hell on earth of dystopian societies "is not that far removed from Dante's medieval dream-vision of Dis, the city of hell" Gottlieb explains that both Dante and Western dystopian fiction authors want to warn readers about the sin of succumbing to temptation — of sin on the one hand and dictatorship on the other. Of course, dystopian literature goes beyond Dante's inferno to a situation where the abolition of love and familial relationships shatters the core of the individual mind and personality. Gottlieb writes, 'By being relentlessly bombarded by state propaganda while also being deprived of privacy, and intimate relationships, we may be deprived of the core of our being, our personal memory of the past' (p.12).

Gottlieb managed to assemble an overview of seven salient characteristics that are present in dystopian novels by examining different literary works, including (Huxley's *Brave New World,* Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Vonnegut's *Player Piano*, and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*).

1. *The push and pull between utopian and dystopian perspectives* suggest a dream or abused promise of a utopian future within the manufactured world of a dystopia. More specifically, what was dreamed or imagined as a utopia turned out to be a fascist utopia with little appeal and grave consequences for humanity because a utopia was designed "exclusively for a master race but also a dream envisaging the elimination or domination of "inferior races" - the majority of humanity." (Gottlieb, 2001, p.8)

2. *The deliberate miscarriage of justice: the protagonist's trial*

The second theme in the six literary works studied by Gottlieb is the idea that the characters must suffer and conquer a challenge of a particular character. The trial exemplifies "the elite's original idealistic vow to construct a just, lawful society and its later wilful miscarriage of justice, its plot against its own people." (Gottlieb, 2001, p.10) In Gottlieb's opinion, the trial experience is thematically and symbolically typical of the dystopian genre because it enables the reader to acknowledge and assign the protagonist's values like consciousness, memory, loyalty, and selfhood—privileges that the protagonists deprive themselves of.

3. *A barbaric state religion – a nightmare vision*

Gottlieb depicts that in this stage, the protagonist understands, because of the trial experience, that dystopian society acts as a primitive state religion that conducts the ritual of human sacrifice rather than as the rule of civilized law and justice. 'It is here that the reasoning that motivates the dystopian state's dualities of law and lawlessness, propaganda and truth, advanced technology and regression to barbarism is revealed to us, and this revelation further contributes to the nightmare atmosphere of the dystopian novel' (Gottlieb, 2001,p.11) Furthermore, despite having extremely sophisticated technology in dystopian settings, there is often a return to barbarism exposed to the reader, which strengthens the dystopian genre's nightmarish vision. Gottlieb describes this trait as a collective nightmare in which the protagonists lose control over their fate and fall victim to awful powers.

4. *The destruction of the individual's private world*

Gottlieb discusses the ramifications of dictators' intentional erasure of a person's privacy, sentiments, family, thoughts, emotions, and sexuality. She explains that if they succeed, that will result in eliminating the "very heart of the individual mind and individuality - what remains is the malleable, dull awareness of mass man" P.11). Gottlieb adds: 'Ultimately, by being relentlessly bombarded by state propaganda while also being deprived of privacy and intimate relationships, we may be deprived of the core of our being, our personal memory of the past.'

5. *The protagonist's pursuit of history: the vital importance of a record of the past*

The protagonists get the need or pursuit of history by chronicling the past to distinguish between falsehoods, truths, and cause and effect. This recording of the history can be done by getting historical literature, such as the Bible, or by maintaining a diary, and by doing so, the protagonist strives to dismantle and rid the dictatorship of the isolation imposed by the separate administrations. According to Gottlieb, this trait of recording the past is an essential feature that the dystopian authors aim to portray, namely that knowing one's history is critical to society's mental health. Gottlieb elaborates that:

Through these diaries or books, the protagonist wants to break the isolation the dictatorship has created by cutting off man from woman,

parent from child, friend from friend, the present from the past, and the world within from the world outside the regime. (p.13)

6.   *Dystopia is no man's land between satire and tragedy*

This trait relates to the protagonist's terrible fate, his or her loss of a loved one, the freedom, individualism, and/or privacy that can exist within the framework of political satire, and the tension between the novel's condemnation of society's problems and its fear of any potential repercussions. The reader is forced to contemplate the security of our humanity in the no-land man between satire and tragedy, as it challenges the behaviors and aberrations of society that we must be aware of if we are to avert such a reality (Gottlieb, 2001, p.14). As a result, satire and tragedy in the dystopian genre serve primarily as a social, political, and historical message about society rather than the world as a whole (Gottlieb, 2001, p.15).

7.   *The protagonist's window on the past: two-time planes*

This quality emphasizes the significance of approaching history truthfully. According to Gottlieb, the protagonist's fictitious world should be seen as "a hypothetical future," and consequently, the two-time planes are linked in a "cause-effect connection" (Gottlieb, 2001, p.15). This discussion implies that the novels, in some ways, establish a "window into history," or, more accurately, the past in the dystopian genre is a depiction of the reader's present, emphasizing the difference and actuality of the two planes. This trait implicitly works as a warning technique or cautionary tale in its approach to magnifying societal difficulties. Gottlieb warns readers, saying:

Beware: The protagonist's present could become your future. Consequently, in our world of the present, we should fight the specific trends that the satirist suggests could, but should not be allowed to, develop into the monstrous nightmare world of the future. (p.15)

In the previous quotation, Gottlieb addresses the readers and advises them to be cautious because the protagonist's present may become their future. As a result, they must be aware of their natural lives and oppose specific patterns in their current society that should not be allowed to evolve into the terrible nightmare world of the future.

5. Discussion and Analysis

5.1 Synopsis

Dreams of Resurrection is Mohammad Gamal's second novel, published in 2018; the novel traces the life of Nabil Al Masri, who is born with a silver spoon in his mouth; he is the single offspring of an ultra-rich Egyptian family and stands to inherit an enormous sum of money and assets at a young age. His wealth didn't stop him from pursuing his education abroad. He insisted on working for a foreign business in London to obtain more experience before taking over the complete management of the family companies. Nabil is so patriotic to Egypt and believes that the country will have significant economic potential in the future; he insists on expanding the family business inside Egypt during the five years he spent in *Dreams of Resurrection, which* is Mohammad Gamal's second novel, published in 2018. the novel traces the life of Nabil Al Masri, who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth; he is the single offspring of an ultra-rich Egyptian family and stands to inherit an enormous sum of money and assets at a young age. His wealth did not stop him from pursuing his education abroad, and he insisted on working for a foreign business in London to obtain more experience before taking over the complete management of the family companies. Nabil is patriotic to Egypt and believes that the country will have significant economic potential in the future; he insists on expanding the family business inside Egypt. During the five years that he spent in London, he worked day and night on creating an ambitious and thriving business plan that, within a few months, he was able to bring exceptional prosperity to the business.

The highest tension point in the novel occurs when Nabil arrives in Egypt, returning from a European tour to Italy and England, and decides to spend time with his childhood friend Moheb. Unintentionally, Nabil transmits a deadly ambiguous virus to Moheb, who falls into a deep coma. Recognizing that there is no treatment for the virus on the world level, Nabil secretly signs a contract with an Italian pharmaceutical company that claims to have succeeded in finding medicine for the virus, but it has succeeded only on animals. The Italian team arrives in Egypt and starts developing a cure for the virus. The team informs Nabil that he is infected, but his body has developed a strange type of immunity system; therefore, he has no symptoms.

Meanwhile, media news started posting reports about the ambiguous disappearance of about 30 patients from hospitals and involvement in mega organ trafficking crime, and authorities are investigating the case. Ambitious news reporter Nadia starts her investigations, and despite all the difficulties, she manages to find out that Nabil Al Masri is the responsible person for the patients' disappearance and that he transferred the bodies to one of his isolated luxurious resorts in Egypt to let Italian team run their experiments on the patients. Unfortunately, the experiments ended with the death of 52 patients, and their corpses were buried secretly in the resort's golf course.

Full of guilt and sorrow, Nabil, unable to believe the complications of the situation and the sickness of his dear friend, suddenly decides to leave everything behind in Egypt and starts a self-discovery journey in India. After a few months of contemplation, yoga, fasting, and meditation, Nabil has strong feelings of repentance and decides to go back to Egypt and do his best to fix the miserable situation by providing help to poor people. Ironically, Nabil is arrested by his security officer, Mahdi Pasha, who decides that Nabil will ruin his reputation if he reveals the truth; therefore, he decides to get rid of him and Nadia and bury them alive in the resort next to the other corpses. The novel closes with a mega rescue scene for Nabil and Nadia. Nabil is portrayed to the public as a victim who was kidnapped and almost killed by a corrupt police officer. Nabil is saved after being buried alive, and his friend Moheb wakes up from a coma. Lab results show that he is in full shape, as if both were resurrected from death, as the title indicates.

5.2 Gottlieb's Dystopian Theory and Dreams of Resurrection

This section will read *Dreams of Resurrection* vis-à-vis Gottlieb's theoretical concepts of Dystopian fiction. In short, the world portrayed in the novel displays many characteristics typical of totalitarian societies, as depicted by Gottlieb.

The first characteristic presented in dystopian novels by Gottlieb is the "push and pull." She elucidates that dystopian novels reveal within their framework a juxtaposition with utopian novels; she discusses cases of an elite protagonist who has a utopian promise to establish justice in his homeland but later on betrays that promise and changes into a destructive machine, she also wonders 'how an originally utopian promise was abused, betrayed, or, ironically, fulfilled to create tragic consequences for humanity' (p.8). In *Dreams of Resurrection*, Nabil, who comes from the elite class, dreamed of upgrading Egypt's economy by investing millions in a mega project that depended on agriculture. Nabil believed in changing the stereotypical image of looking down on craftsmen in society and encouraging the productive mentality among Egyptians, 'To change this stereotype and to make production part of your life, without feeling that it belongs to a lower class looked down upon with contempt, this is exactly what I seek when I speak of change' (p.28). Nabil's love and passion for his country are also revealed when the author describes his relationship with his best friend Moheb, 'Nabil kept looking at Moheb as if he was quenching a long thirst, his thirst for Egypt, family, friends, projects, and dreams that he came back to achieve' (p.31) His plans carried pure utopian themes but later on when the storyline progresses we find him following corrupted steps to reach his goal such as bribing security officials from the Ministry of Interiors. As Gottlieb indicates, such action creates an inner contradiction between a utopian dream that is miscarried and changed into a dystopian one.

The second characteristic proposed by Gottlieb is the idea that the protagonists must suffer and defeat a trial of a particular character. She illustrates that the protagonist recognizes the state of duality between law and lawlessness; the protagonist is shocked by the elite's self-justification and must face a horrifying punishment. In Gamal's novel, the moment the protagonist Nabil decides to fix his mistakes, he finds himself arrested by higher authorities and finds out that he was under intensive surveillance the whole time; Nabil is arrested, accused of betrayal to the elites, and sentenced to death. In the novel, Mahdi Pasha, who oversaw security at Nabil's Economic Group, accuses him of being stupid and threatening other elite people. 'The villa was under control since you disappeared without prior notice. I knew that you were out of control and would make trouble (..) take the two of them and bury them alive in Gouna, next to the others. Remove all the signs of their identity. Remove any personal belongings.' (p.211)

The third characteristic of the dystopian characteristics is what Gottlieb describes as a 'collective nightmare vision' where humans are sacrificed in a barbaric ritual. In that society, citizens lose control over their destinies and are manipulated by extremely powerful dictators. In the novel, Amin and another 50 patients infected by the virus could not decide on their fates, their families were deceived, and their bodies were kidnapped, abused, and exploited similarly to laboratory mice to perform AuroraX experiments. 'Every week, the researchers received two or three patients to test the antidote on(..) Amin's condition did not respond, and he died within 24 hours.' (p.123) The reader becomes aware of weird logic that, according to Gottlieb, consists 'of a mythical, ritualistic way of thinking in dystopian societies'; this way of thinking could be seen in the inner justification provided by Aurora, the leader of the Italian team responsible for developing the cure for the virus who was convinced that 'Each corpse left the center was a necessary sacrifice.' (p.125)

Breaking down the individual's private life by totalitarian dictatorship is the fourth and most striking characteristic of dystopian fiction, as described by Gottlieb. Modern technology dominates people's 'private self, family feelings, sexuality, thoughts, and emotions.' (Gottlieb p.11) In Dreams of Resurrection, Mahdi Pasha invades Nabil's villa with special forces, beats him fiercely, and puts cuffs on his hands violently without providing him with any explanation. Moreover, Mahdi Pasha reveals to Nabil that he was under their surveillance the whole time. Then, he instructs a police officer to collect all of Nabil's personal stuff and put it into their custody. 'Get all the mobiles, laptops, computers, papers, files and any safe you find(...) Remove all our spy devices, microphones, and cameras, and do not forget those devices at the front and back entrances.' (p.210) Mahdi Pasha orders the officers to remove the Cross tattoo on Nabil's arm, intending to erase Nabil's self-identity and even religion.

According to Gottlieb, the protagonist's pursuit of history is the fifth characteristic of dystopian fiction. She claims that protagonists keep some books, diaries, or notes from their past to break the state of isolation from the world outside the regime and maintain stable mental health. Following this theory, readers notice the importance of the recording process to Nabil; he recorded all his dreams in special notebooks and kept them in a special drawer. 'The most surprising about Nabil's frequent dreams was that he believed in them to the extent that he kept a small notebook on the commode next to his bed to write what he dreamed of immediately after waking up.' (p.53) Nabil's private record of his dreams is penetrated twice in the narrative; the first time when the journalist Nadine stole the notebooks from his villa and the second time when Mahdi Pasha ordered officers to get rid of them.

The sixth characteristic of dystopian fiction, as identified by Gottlieb, is that the novel occupies a type of no-man's land between tragedy and satire. She elaborates 'Dystopian satire focuses on society, not on the cosmos, and it has a primarily social-political message, a didactic intent to address the Ideal Reader's moral sense and reason as it applies to the protagonist's – and our own – place in society and history.' (p.15) The tragic fate of more than 50 patients in the novel corresponds to Gottlieb's theory; the patients were deprived of their humanity and freedom to choose whether they wanted to test the medicine or not, and finally, they lost their lives without announcing their families and having proper funerals. Furthermore, the patients' families were dehumanized and faced feelings of guilt, loss of loved ones, and their existence as recognized citizens. Gamal describes some of the patients' families in a desperate situation, facing blame and accusations of bribes: 'The people in front of him were pale, exhausted, extremely tired and nervous' (p.128). They cried for help: 'I want

to know where my son is. At least if he passed away, I want to bury him properly. I want nothing else.' (p.128)

The last characteristic of dystopian fiction, according to Gottlieb, is the protagonist's window on the past; she explains that readers of the novel must identify the two-time planes that are different between the reader's reality and the protagonist's reality. Gottlieb describes this characteristic as a 'window on history,' a strategic writing technique used by the writer to reveal the roots of dystopian society to the readers and warn them that the protagonist's present might be their future. Gottlieb adds, ' The writer of dystopian fiction offers in each novel a warning against a future that could and should still be avoided by the Ideal Reader's generation.' (p.16) In his novel, Gamal sheds light on corruption in Egypt, generally and specifically in the medical and media sectors, by predicting that a virus will invade the country and end people's lives unless something is done. This concept could be seen in some conversations between Abdel Moneim and Assem:' For your information, this virus has killed many people abroad, but the government and the Ministry of Health are completely blacking it out (…) The hospital here is run by a few businessmen, more like butchers, Haj. They aim to take money from the patients by any means (p.90,91). Ironically, no news agency or TV program discussed the news about the disappearance of patients from local hospitals. There was minor news that Egyptian officers were facing Mafia of human organs, and a Detective General appeared in the news saying that The country has just started to settle down, security and economy began to flourish, we started to witness great investments in medical tourism, and suddenly we are facing the current dilemma. This is undoubtedly a conspiracy in order to weaken confidence.' (p.127,128).

6. Conclusion

This analysis has shown that *Dreams of Resurrection* is a prototypical dystopian literature. Mohammad Gamal skilfully incorporates several dystopian qualities throughout the narrative, creating a plot that closely adheres to the classic features of dystopian literature, as described by Erika Gottlieb's ideas. While Gamal may not have consciously included Gottlieb's dystopian framework in his writing, his story effectively exemplifies many of its ideas, making it a captivating subject for examination within this genre.

Dreams of Resurrection invites readers to reassess prevailing social and political inclinations, encouraging them to contemplate present circumstances to avert a horrible future. This thought is especially relevant considering the novel's setting during a pandemic, which mirrors the worldwide coronavirus outbreak and its effects on society. The narrative's examination of authority, suppression, and the quest for significance among disorder strongly connects with readers, emphasizing the enduring significance of dystopian fiction.

It is evident that the emergence of dystopian literature in the Arab East, particularly during the pandemic, signifies a collective disillusionment among society and serves as a mode of resistance. These tales portray grim truths and endeavor to discover significance and purpose during disorder, providing a critical analysis of modern society and urging for more consciousness and transformation.

It is worth noting that due to the distinct themes and aspects exclusive to Arabic and Egyptian settings, it is necessary to establish a separate classification system for Arabic dystopias. When categorizing, it is important to thoroughly consider the distinct social, political, historical, and cultural variables specific to the Arab world. The conventional method of analyzing dystopian tales is insufficient when applied to the literary works that have surfaced in the Arab literary landscape, namely those originating from Egypt during the early 21st century. By establishing a suitable framework for examining Arabic dystopian literature, we may enhance our comprehension and admiration of the unique contributions made by these tales to the worldwide dystopian tradition.

This study concludes that *Dreams of Resurrection* not only conforms to the dystopian genre but also enhances it by tackling the distinct obstacles and truths of the Arab world. This research emphasizes the significance of analyzing these tales from a perspective that recognizes their distinct setting, therefore adding to a more comprehensive and detailed comprehension of dystopian literature.

About the Authors

Biography

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Biography

Halimah Mohamed Ali (Ph. D) is a Literature lecturer at the School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia. She joined the university in 1997 and has produced 2 books and 100 essays. She has also presented papers at national and international conferences. She reviews articles for national and international journals, is a member of literary bodies, and is a board member of several international journals. She lectures in English and Malay languages.

Authors' contributions

Sara Hamzeh:

Researching for the paper

Analyzing data

Writing up the paper

Halimah Mohamed Ali:

Supervising the research, analysis, and writing process.

Reviewing the essay.

Editing the essay.

Proofreading the essay.

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