



# Prognostication of Coronavirus and other Forthcomings in English literature

**Merry Baghwar**

Assistant Professor

Department of English and Literary Studies

Brainware University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

**Abstract:** Assuming literature a pioneer of prophesizing future which reminds of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the three witches foretelling Macbeth's succeeding that fortunately comes true. The paper intends to manifest the significance of literature in the society; how literature predicts future and profuse awareness. No wonder what we are reading in the fiction today might soon be the news of tomorrow. The impact of literature that has been showering in the society by foreseeing the future is unconditionally astonishing; in fact, at present, it's stumping the internet, for instance, Coronavirus, after forty years is being the most controversial topic, which is a bitter truth for the people to digest. Although sad, but this paper claims a grander support with the number of positive interpretations that has come into being since long time. We cannot deny the fact that literature is playing a vital role in our day-to-day life.

**KEYWORDS:** Literature, Prediction, Futuristic, Coronavirus, Government, Social-media, Awareness, Society.

Literature being the written material like poetry, novels, history, essays, biographies, plays etc., literature, which is completely mistaken as an object of reading and enjoying, other than these, literature is an emotion, an experience, a thought provoking, a meaning, a message, a moral, and a prodigious agenda for the society. Literature is also a prediction, without loath many a times a future

foreteller, that plays a crucial role in proliferating awareness to the society. Hence, not only a piece of printed paper, literature is something to think about. There are interpretations that have unexpectedly come true and it's sinking in the society and few yet to plunge. To refer a few examples; H.G. Wells, 'a science fiction pioneer' he not only predicted but also inspired, from laser to email inventions in his 'scientific fantasy' novel *Men like Gods*. George Orwell, 'an anti-Semitic' his famous phrase, "Big Brother is watching you" from the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and those technological innovations that have come true after seventy years since *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published were; Telescreen, Speakwrite, Floating Fortress, Versificator, and Big Brother. Next but not the least the burning issue today in 2020 harkened in every individual's conversation, a very serious subject 'Coronavirus'. Aiming directly towards Dean Koontz who had forty years ago interpreted the disease definitely not with the same term corona but 'Wuhan-400' in his thrilling novel *The Eyes of Darkness*, is quite similar to what's happening in China. In this sense, literature plays a significant role in the society, not only by predicting things but also building a serious awareness.

Interpretations eternally hatch excitements, curiosity and interest but when those predictions come true, it generates the hair on the neck stand. All such emotions are generated through literature; it takes years and decades to obtain such amount of knowledge that a single book of literary merit inculcates in a reader. Literature mirrors the society; it urges readers to visit places, meet people, touch their happiness and sorrows, observe and understand the events, it reflects the mannerisms of an individual, and convincingly literature enlightens the human about survival either through its morals or predictions. Critical examples in the works of H.G. Wells, George Orwell, Dean Koontz, Jules Verne, Morgan Robertson etc. have well flourished with their interpretations. "Futurism is a modernist avant-garde movement in literature" (The Free Encyclopedia 27 Oct. 2019) there are few aspects that futurist literature primarily focuses on: specifically, Intuition, Analogy, and Irony.

### **Coronavirus prophesized in 1981**

The world would brood over the serious and the current syndrome of 2019 Coronavirus for decades, which has been the reason for the loss of lives evoked in Wuhan, China. More than seventeen hundred people suffered and lost their breath due to this deadly plague coronavirus explosion in the Wuhan city which at present has spread over to twenty five countries, but wait, did we notice that a fiction had

already anticipated Wuhan virus almost forty years ago, in Dean Koontz's thriller *The Eyes of Darkness* in 1981. Koontz have named the virus as 'Wuhan-400'. Therefore we witness in the novel that the virus is formed from a biological weapon warfare programme in the laboratory, and his prophecy about Wuhan-400 which is named according to lab's location Wuhan, and now approximately after forty years it's plaguing the entire human world through the coronavirus epidemic in 2019. The protagonist Tina Evans learns about her son Danny, whom she has believed to be dead but he actually is alive and imprisoned at military facility in China where Danny has been infected with man-made microorganisms invented in the bio-research lab. An extract from the novel which is revolving and cracking on social media, is as follows: "It was around then that a Chinese scientist named Li Chen defected to the United States, carrying a diskette record of China's most important and dangerous: new biological weapon in a decade. They call the stuff 'Wuhan-400' because it was developed at their RDNA labs outside of the city of Wuhan, and it was the four-hundredth viable strain of man-made microorganisms created at that research centre" (Koontz 209) the parallelism between novel's Wuhan virus of 1981 and the actual coronavirus of 2019 explosion is mystifying and weird which is utterly inexplicable.

H.G. Wells have evoked a number of futuristic visions, that haven't yet come true: a machine that may travel back in time from his novel *The Time Machine*, a man who transforms into invisible, an idea from *The Invisible Man*, and a Martian invasion that ruins Southern England, the destruction seen in *The War of the Worlds*. We never know what comes tomorrow hence it sounds bizarre reading such strange interpretations, but simultaneously we cannot deny the fact about various numbers of predictions that have already come into existence. Wells invites us to a futuristic utopia, in such veracity, people are able to communicate solely with wireless systems that uses a kind of interweaving of voicemail and Email like properties. In utopia usually communication of two persons on telephone doesn't take place at all in case of sudden exceptions, "A message is sent to the station of the district in which the recipient is known to be, and there it waits until he chooses to tap his accumulated messages. And any that one wishes to repeat can be repeated. Then he talks back to the senders and dispatches any other messages he wishes. The transmission is wireless." (Handwerk 2016)

Wells on the other side imagined some sort of future entertainment, the protagonist of *When the Sleeper Wakes*, wakes after two centuries of asleep to a dystopian London where he sees the citizens using

miraculous types of technologies such as the audio book, airplane, television, yet people are victims of regular despotism and social infringement. In *The War of the Worlds*, 1898, Wells called a term 'Heat-Ray' a powerful weapon proficient of igniting helpless people with a noiseless beam of light. "It would be more than six decades before Theodore Maiman fired up the first operational laser at California's Hughes Research Laboratory on May 16, 1960" (2016) Wells' summarization is not that accurate to encourage a working laser, but it features the device laser and other weapons, viz; microwaves, electromagnetic radiations, radio/sound waves, that have been established in United States and by other militaries in recent years. Another major discussion thread is the world-changing toxic and disastrous power 'atom bomb' was astonishingly recognised by Wells in *The World Set Free*, 1913, where the injured and the survivors, due to the destructive war, were helpless to forge a world government in order to evade any other future disasters.

George Orwell uncovers what has been going on under Stalin for approximately a decade, leading to show trial and death penalty. He enumerates a better deal about the state of Corbyn's Labour Party. Before anyone else have thought of the 'Treaty of Rome' and the EEC (European Economic Community) Orwell interpreted that dominant nations of post-war Europe would design a neo-federal union, but the most compelling that something would alienate them. Thus resulted to 'Brexit' i.e. withdrawal of the United Kingdom from EEC now named as EU (European Union). It seems that China's ruling Communist party might be adopting Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a road map. Anyway, more than Orwell had imagined the 'Big Brother' a dominant character in his novel, China's Big Brother's totalitarianism is terrifying and worse than Orwell's. Now stepping back to the terms and conditions constituted by Orwell in his dystopian state where each word is checked and supervised, obnoxious speech is omitted, similarly, today social media companies 24/7 keep the record of committing thoughtcrimes and are exiled to 'unperson'. History is re-drafted and deleted if not necessary, "Big Brother's regime uses a "memory hole" to destroy any facts or documents that become inconvenient to the regime's preferred narrative" (Klaas 2017) these predictions were vehemently factual, today, government secretly rewrites press releases to erase previous statements that were incorrect. President Trump has invited the 'memory hole' in US; in 2017 Trump deletes infinite tweets

that had forever perished, as if it had never existed. “Big Brother never gets it wrong — and Trump the Winner never backs a loser” (2017).

Besides being a fictional character, ‘Big Brother’ is a symbol that literally shows up in the form of warnings and threatening postures to frighten the people. It symbolizes dictatorial power ogling into people’s lives. The phrase “Big Brother is watching you” (Orwell 3) which means every step of an individual is being watched and surveyed by the government, which is an excellent medium to discipline and suppress the will of the citizens “Big Brother is watching you after all” (3). In 2018 if we recall, the leader of North Korea Kim Jong-Un lofted a new set of doctrine, his images on the postures inducing his people to struggle and make him and his reign proud. Before it slips from the memory, no one can deny mentioning, the giant eyes in the postures of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, hovering the passers-by. Thereupon the ministry of peace entangles with war, the ministry of truth concerns with falsity, the ministry of love with torment, the ministry of wealth with malnutrition. George Orwell and Franz Kafka have prophesized ‘New India’, Orwell’s *Animal Farm*’ is the finest example of clever political satire, wit and amusement. Where animals struggle for their freedom against the farmer (human) but finally end up in worse condition. Kafka’s Existentialism, deals with one’s isolation in the entire world, either there is no presence of God or maybe God is standing aloof and away from man, free to take liberty of his own choices. Such is the new government of India. “Indeed, Modi began his 2014 election campaign on a modest note with the catchy ‘Abki Baar Modi Sarkar’ (It’s Modi’s turn to rule) promising ‘achhe din’ (good times) to the long-deprived and corruption-weary masses.... that he is God’s gift to India. People know what they want and deserve to get it good and hard” (Syed 2018).

Furthermore, Orwell imagines telescreens, Speakwrite, floating fortress, and Versificator, telescreens, that could identify a person, notice all their altering facial expressions, even a large TVs that can detect every corner of the house, public places, etc., today facial identification software is emerging in an extraordinary rate. “In May 2019, a British office worker who guessed his photo was taken by facial recognition cameras as he ate his lunch sued South Wales police in a landmark case against the tech” (Bostock 2019). 1984’s protagonist, Winston Smith uses Speakwrite as a copy-writer in his office, which is kind of recording device, when a person speaks it converts into text on the telescreen. And need not list, there are today bags of apps that perform transcription services, like Orwell interpreted

that the technology is helpful and in high requirement. “Android phone users can now utilize the Live Transcribe feature. It's designed for deaf people and can change 70 languages from speech to text in real time. Otter is another free app that transcribes speech on the go” (2019). According to the novel, Floating Fortress is illustrated as an enormous military bases that escorts those spots that are planned on the sea route. Orwell notes that feeble moving battleship has paved the way to the unsinkable floating fortress and since 2016; China has been establishing quite many artificial islands in South China Sea to claim its sovereignty and post an affirm to the route. In the novel *1984*, Versificator is a device which inevitably produces music and literature on the flow without human involvement, which is definitely designed by artificial intelligence. Orwell manifests the music created by the Versificator in *1984* in this way:

The tune had been haunting London for weeks past. It was one of countless similar songs published for the benefit of the proles by a sub-section of the Music Department.

In the last 3 years, both the worlds of music and literature have announced their first autonomous creations. In 2017, the every first album produced by AI was released.

In *1984*, Orwell describes how Oceania's musical propaganda "were composed without any human intervention whatever on an instrument known as a Versificator." In March 2017, author Ross Goodwin sent his laptop in a car from New York to New Orleans in homage to Jack Kerouac's "On the Road." On the laptop AI software used a camera, GPS, microphone, and clock attached to the car to record information, process it, and translate it into a novel based on its own terms (2019).

Almost many of the predictions of Orwell have come into presence, either coincidentally or by reading his works seriously.

There is none who is not aware of Neil Armstrong, the first man to land in the moon in 1969, but very few might have realized after reading a novel *The Earth to the Moon* in 1865 by Jules Verne. A story about a vast space gun launching objects to the moon, Verne's fiction predicted several men flying over spacecraft and the astronauts experiencing weightlessness and other varieties in space. People's most favourite movie *Titanic*, or the sinking of the titanic, Morgan Robertson might have unintentionally

penned down in his novella, *The Wreck of the Titan*, in 1898, a story about the giant unsinkable ship that accidentally sinks in the North Atlantic after hitting an iceberg, consequently the tragedy of Titanic in April 1912 is well known by everyone.

If we are on the verge of digging the prophecies, the facts resulted through predictions would never end, but conclusively, literature has proved its vital role in one's life and society. Authors unwittingly pen down the future foresights in their stories and other writings but when it comes to being, it sounds astounding and superhuman that causes human to freak. This paper certainly substantiates how literature solely prognosticates the future and other forthcoming circumstances.

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