

Human Degradation: A Text-to-Film Comparison of the Human Hunts in Connell's "The Most Dangerous Game" and Goldwing's *Lord of the Flies*

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As it is well known, the two World Wars fought during the 20th Century disrupted social ideals of stability and freedom. Societies witnessed how humankind, at last, had acquired the destructive capability to wipe out civilization and this bitter realization triggered moods of hopelessness, existential anguish, and spiritual emptiness, which emerged in the literary production of both the victorious and defeated countries that engaged into such devastating armed conflicts. In this context, literature formulated dystopian world-views where authoritarian governments oppressed individuals to preserve the system. These texts presented regimes that, in an attempt to keep social stability, resorted to policies that were disguised as scientific theories characterized by their most blatant lack of respect for humanity.

Human hunts clearly exemplify the ruthless gubernatorial strategies explored by dystopian literature. Since the publication of Connell's "The Most Dangerous Game" and Goldwing's *Lord of the Flies*, in 1924 and 1954, respectively, several authors became part of the trend and imagined dystopian visions that elaborated the concept of human hunts in several settings, where groups of people competed savagely to survive and often engaged into mortal combats. The two former texts, however, first explored the idea of humans being hunted by their peers outside a civilized context and, thus, become significant: they depict proto-dystopian societies where violence becomes an acceptable resource to keep the social stability of a group.

Movie adaptations of these literary works face the dilemma of fidelity. Is the movie supposed to follow the source as closely as possible or can it diverge? Although current criticism favors the freedom to swerve from the original work, Stam argues that fidelity still retains some experiential truth, for the audience perceives a betrayal when film adaptations forget the fundamental narrative of the source.

However, as movies are expected to generate a significant income, the changes made might not respond to aesthetic considerations, but to commercial ones which, paradoxically, affects the reception of the film.

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