

THE KEY ELEMENTS OF DYSTOPIA & POST-APOCALYPTIC FICTION



UTOPIA VS. DYSTOPIA

A utopia is a place or state of things in which everything is perfect.

A dystopia is a community or society that is undesirable or frightening.

WHAT IS DYSTOPIA? (cont.)

Dystopias are characterized by dehumanization, totalitarian governments, or other characteristics associated with a cataclysmic decline in society.

Reasons for dystopia:

Environment

WHAT IS DYSTOPIA? (cont.)

Dystopias are characterized by dehumanization, totalitarian governments, or other characteristics associated with a cataclysmic decline in society.

Reasons for dystopia:

Politics or Economics

WHAT IS DYSTOPIA? (cont.)

Dystopias are characterized by dehumanization, totalitarian governments, or other characteristics associated with a cataclysmic decline in society.

Reasons for dystopia:

Breakdown of Science

WHAT IS DYSTOPIA? (cont.)

Dystopias are characterized by dehumanization, totalitarian governments, or other characteristics associated with a cataclysmic decline in society.

Reasons for dystopia:

Technology

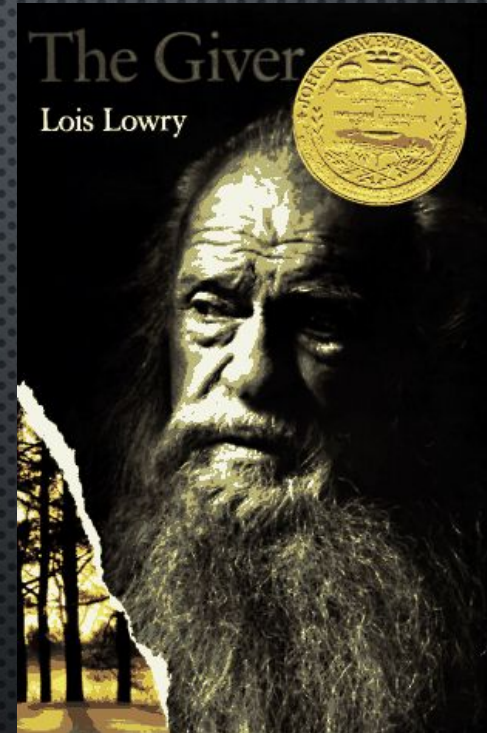
EXAMPLES OF DYSTOPIAS



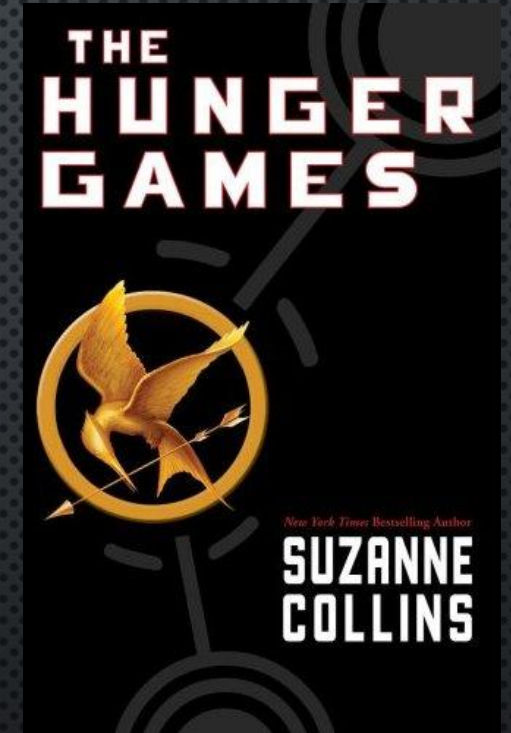
Society



Technology



Society



Politics

WHAT MAKES A DYSTOPIAN STORY?

Backstory

Back story of how this world came to be or how it evolved (or de-evolved) from the current world is necessary.

WHAT MAKES A DYSTOPIAN STORY?

Hero or Heroine



The hero feels something is wrong with society and sets out to change it, believing that it is possible to overthrow the dictatorship, or merely escape from the misery.

WHAT MAKES A DYSTOPIAN STORY?

Conflict



Often, the hero meets a person who represents the dystopia, possibly the leader of the society. In the conflict, the hero meets and is sometimes helped by a group of people who are also trying to escape or destroy the dystopia.

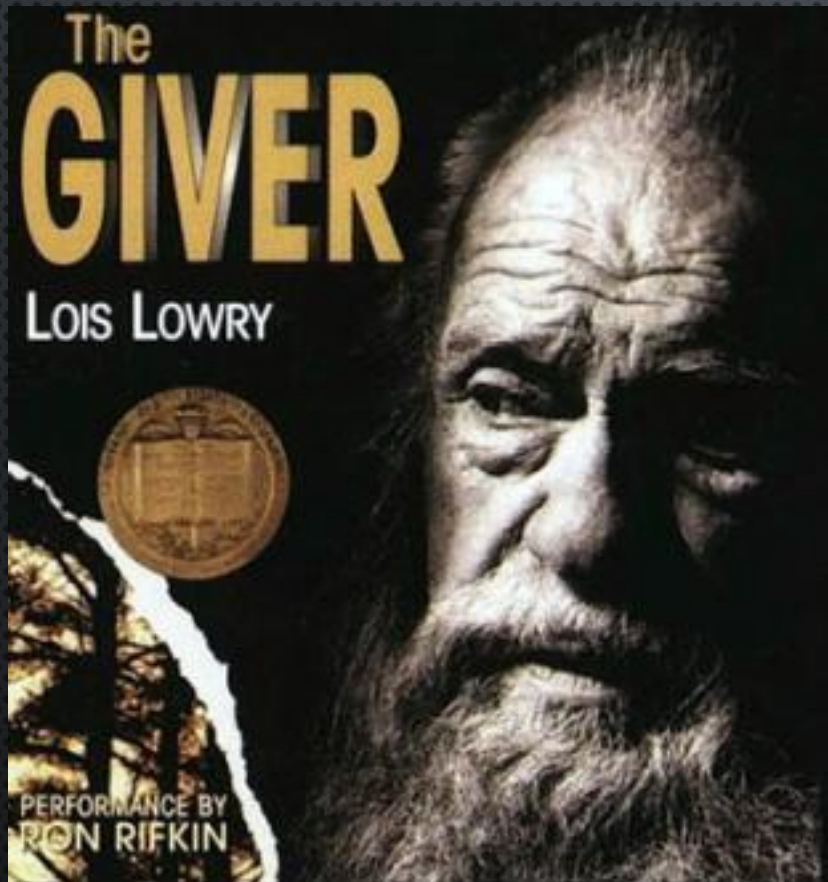
WHAT MAKES A DYSTOPIAN STORY?

Climax

In dystopian literature, the story is often unresolved.

Often the dystopia is not brought down. The hero may make their stand and fails, but gives hope to others in the dystopia.

Sometimes this climax is the hero's escape from the dystopia . Other times the hero fails to achieve anything and the dystopia continues as before.



WHAT IS POST-APOCALYPTIC FICTION?

Apocalyptic fiction is a sub-genre of that is concerned with the end of human civilization.

Post-apocalyptic fiction is set in a world or civilization after such a disaster that ruins the world.

WHAT IS POST-APOCALYPTIC FICTION?

Post-apocalyptic fiction takes place:

- **immediately after the catastrophe, focusing on the travels or psychology of survivors**

OR

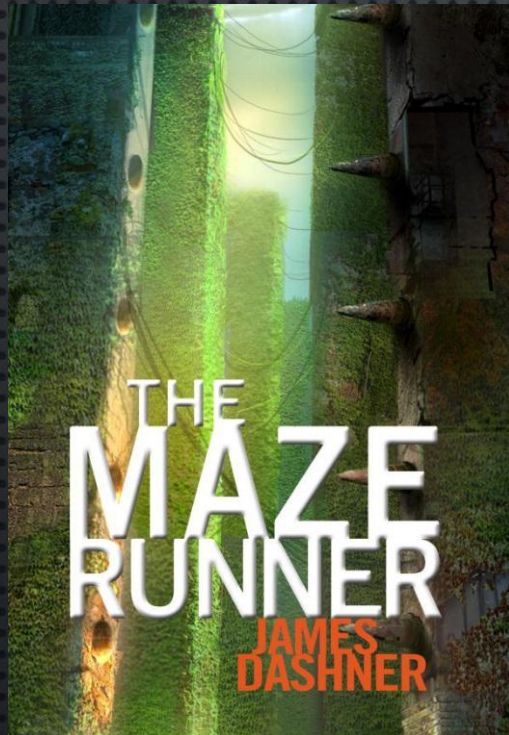
- **later, often including the theme that the existence of the civilization before the catastrophe has been forgotten (or mythologized).**

WHAT IS POST-APOCALYPTIC FICTION?

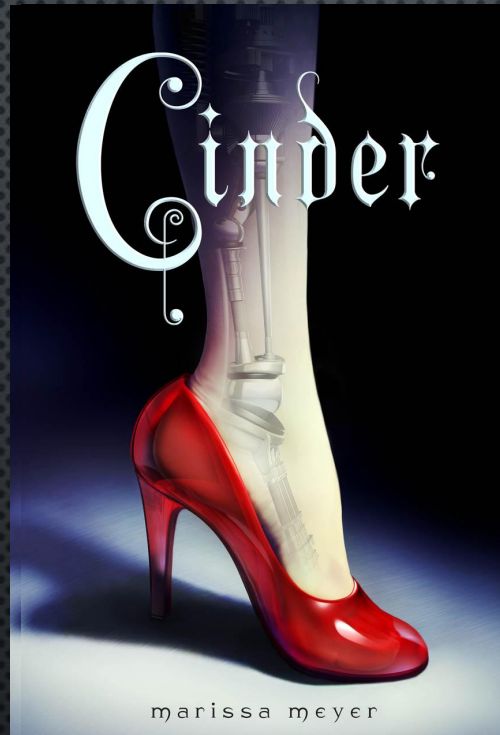
Examples of Catastrophes include:

- **Nuclear Warfare**
- **Plague**
- **Extraterrestrial Attack**
- **Impact Event**
- **Technological Revolt**
- **Dysgenics (genes)**
- **Supernatural Phenomena**
- **Divine Judgment**

EXAMPLES OF POST-APOCALYPTIC FICTION



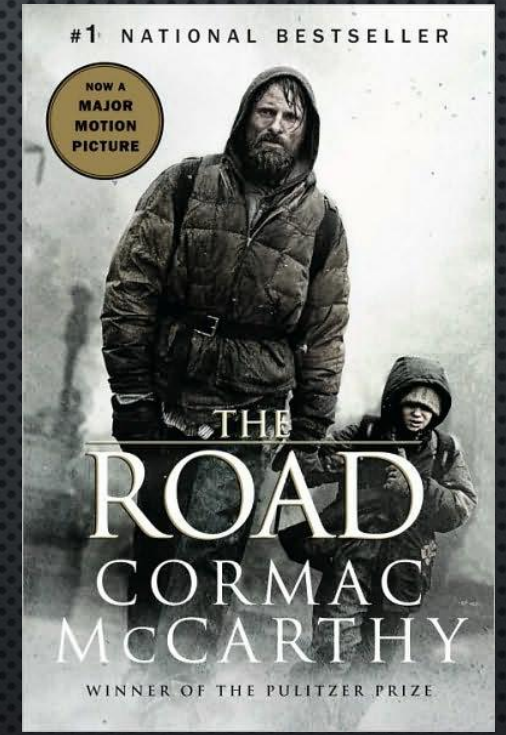
Ecological



Technology



Plague



Nuclear Warfare

WHAT MAKES A POST-APOCALYPTIC STORY?

Types of Post-Apocalyptic Stories

There are two main types of post-apocalyptic fiction.

1. There's gritty reality - the 'what if' scenario where life-as-we-know-it ends.
2. There's pure fantasy – like zombies!

WHAT MAKES A POST-APOCALYPTIC STORY?

Location

- **Setting is the most important factor of a post-apocalyptic story.**
- **The setting will set up problems the characters will face.**
- **The setting can be well preserved, completely destroyed, or on its way to restoration.**
- **This will depend on what the apocalypse was, how widespread it was, how many people survived, and how much time has passed since then.**

WHAT MAKES A POST-APOCALYPTIC STORY?

Struggle and Survival

The author has to decide if a story is about struggling to save and change the world or whether it's about a character's struggle to adapt and survive within that world. Do they succeed in their struggle? Or does everything unravel?

WHAT MAKES A POST-APOCALYPTIC STORY?

Survival

Characters will need to survive without most, if not all, the technologies we have today. Those who have no experience with hunting, gathering, and agriculture will have trouble surviving, especially when pre-apocalypse resources start to run out and expire.

WHAT MAKES A POST-APOCALYPTIC STORY?

Sanctuaries

Locating them, getting into them and saving them from destruction. That's all part of great post-apocalyptic fiction. Along with finding food, medical supplies, clothing and other survival gear.

WHAT MAKES A POST-APOCALYPTIC STORY?

Authenticity and continuity

Whatever you choose to write about, make it as authentic as you can.

If the author is writing about zombies, he has to set parameters for them. What can they do? How can they harm you? And remember never ever call them 'zombies' – there are 'walkers', 'deadheads', 'the unconsecrated' and a gazillion other names for the undead. Make up your own. Be consistent and make your world totally believable.

SUZANNE COLLINS

American writer
Suzanne Collins is the
author of the
bestselling The Hunger
Games series and The
Underland Chronicles.



BORN IN HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, IN 1962, SUZANNE COLLINS WAS THE DAUGHTER OF AN AIR FORCE PILOT, AND HER FAMILY MOVED SEVERAL TIMES WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG. AFTER PROVING HERSELF AS A TALENTED CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WRITER, COLLINS PUBLISHED HER DEBUT BOOK, GREGOR THE OVERLANDER, THE FIRST BOOK OF THE UNDERLAND CHRONICLES. IN 2008, THE FIRST BOOK OF THE HUNGER GAMES SERIES WAS PUBLISHED. HER TRILOGY OF HUNGER GAME BOOKS WENT ON TO BECOME A MOTION PICTURE SERIES STARRING JENNIFER LAWRENCE AS KATNISS EVERDEEN.

'THE HUNGER GAMES'

- WHILE THE UNDERLAND CHRONICLES MADE COLLINS A WELL-KNOWN AUTHOR, HER NEXT SERIES RATCHETED UP HER CELEBRITY STATUS. AS COLLINS LATER RECALLED, THE HUNGER GAMES TRILOGY WAS BORN WHILE SHE WAS WATCHING TELEVISION LATE ONE NIGHT. FLIPPING THROUGH THE CHANNELS, COLLINS WAS SUDDENLY STRUCK BY THE LACK OF DISTINCTION BETWEEN REALITY TV AND COVERAGE OF THE IRAQ WAR.

- ❖ FOR COLLINS, THE HUNGER GAMES AND HER OTHER BOOKS TOUCH ON THE VERY SUBJECTS—NECESSARY AND UNNECESSARY WARS—THAT HER OWN FATHER OFTEN DISCUSSED WITH HER.
- ❖ THE SERIES' FIRST BOOK, THE HUNGER GAMES, WAS RELEASED IN 2008. ITS TWO SEQUELS, CATCHING FIRE AND MOCKINGJAY, WERE PUBLISHED IN 2009 AND 2010, RESPECTIVELY. OVERALL, THE SERIES HAS BEEN A FANTASTIC SUCCESS, SELLING MORE THAN 50 MILLION PRINT AND ELECTRONIC COPIES.

PLOT

- THE STORY REVOLVES AROUND THE SERIES' REBEL HEROINE, KATNISS EVERDEEN, WHO LIVES IN THE POST-APOCALYPTIC NATION OF PANEM, FORMERLY KNOWN AS NORTH AMERICA. IN PANEM, THE HUNGER GAMES ARE AN ANNUAL EVENT IN WHICH YOUNG BOYS AND GIRLS FIGHT TO THE DEATH IN A TELEVISED BATTLE. HUNGER GAMES, THE CAPITOL FORCES EACH OF PANEM'S 12 DISTRICTS TO CHOOSE TWO TEENAGERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE HUNGER GAMES, A GRUESOME, TELEVISED FIGHT TO THE DEATH.
- IN THE 12TH DISTRICT, KATNISS EVERDEEN STEPS IN FOR HER LITTLE SISTER AND ENTERS THE GAMES, WHERE SHE IS TORN BETWEEN HER FEELINGS FOR HER HUNTING PARTNER, GALE HAWTHORNE, AND THE DISTRICT'S OTHER TRIBUTE, PEETA MELLARK, EVEN AS SHE FIGHTS TO STAY ALIVE. THE HUNGER GAMES WILL CHANGE KATNISS' LIFE FOREVER, BUT HER ACTS OF HUMANITY AND DEFIANCE MIGHT JUST CHANGE THE GAMES, TOO.

THEMES

✓ THE INEQUALITY BETWEEN RICH AND POOR

IN PANEM, WEALTH IS HEAVILY CONCENTRATED IN THE HANDS OF THE RICH, PARTICULARLY THOSE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CAPITOL AND CERTAIN OF THE DISTRICTS, AND THE RESULT IS A HUGE DISPARITY BETWEEN THEIR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF THE POOR. THIS DISPARITY REVEALS ITSELF IN NUMEROUS WAYS THROUGHOUT THE NOVEL, BUT AMONG THE NOTABLE IS FOOD. IN THE POOR DISTRICTS, MANY OF THE RESIDENTS DO NOT EVEN HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT. MOREOVER, THE RICH WHO DO BECOME TRIBUTES TEND TO HAVE AN ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGE, BECAUSE THEY ARE OFTEN TRAINED TO TAKE PART IN THE GAMES AND VOLUNTEER TO DO SO.

✓ SUFFERING AS ENTERTAINMENT

THE HUNGER GAMES PRESENT THE TRIBUTES' SUFFERING AS MASS ENTERTAINMENT, AND THE MORE THE TRIBUTES SUFFER, IDEALLY IN BATTLE WITH ONE ANOTHER, THE MORE ENTERTAINING THE GAMES BECOME. THE MAIN DRAW OF THE GAMES FOR VIEWERS IS ITS VOYEURISM, IN THIS CASE WATCHING THE TRIBUTES, WHO ARE OF COURSE CHILDREN, FIGHTING AND DYING.

SYMBOLS

◆ MOCKINGJAYS

THE MOCKINGJAY REPRESENTS DEFIANCE IN THE NOVEL, WITH THE BIRD'S SYMBOLISM DERIVING INITIALLY FROM ITS ORIGINS. THE MOCKINGJAY, WE LEARN, CAME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF A FAILED PROJECT BY THE CAPITOL TO SPY ON THE REBELLIOUS DISTRICTS, AND SINCE THEN THE BIRD HAS SERVED AS A REMINDER OF THIS FAILURE AND THE DISTRICTS' RECALCITRANCE

PANEM

PANEM IS THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THE HUNGER GAMES TAKES PLACE, AND IT SYMBOLIZES A DYSTOPIAN UNITED STATES. THE WORD PANEM IS LATIN FOR “BREAD,” OR “BREAD AND CIRCUSES.” THE PHRASE REFERS TO THE ROMAN CAESARS’ STRATEGY OF QUELLING PUBLIC DISCONTENT BY PROVIDING THE PEOPLE WITH PLENTY OF FOOD AND ENTERTAINMENT.