UTOPIAS AND DYSTOPIAS
UTOPIA

- Definition: a place, state, or condition that is ideally perfect in respect to politics, laws, customs, and conditions
- Term first used by Sir Thomas More for his 1516 book *Utopia* about a fictional island in the Atlantic Ocean
- Used to describe both planned communities that attempt to create an ideal society and fictional societies portrayed in literature
DYSTOPIA

- Opposite of utopia
- Definition: an imagined place or state, often presented as a utopia, where control over society is held by an oppressive force
- Dystopias in works of fiction are often used to make a criticism of a current trend, social norm, or political system
CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSTOPIAN SOCIETY

- Information, independent thought, and freedom are controlled by an oppressive force
- Propaganda is used by the oppressive force to control the citizens of the society
- A figurehead, concept, or idea is worshipped by the citizens of the society
- Citizens fear the world outside their society
- The natural world is banished and distrusted
- Citizens conform to their society’s expectations
- Society is an illusion of a utopia
TYPES OF DYSTOPIAN CONTROL

- Corporate
- Governmental
- Technological
- Philosophical/Religious
- Post-Apocalyptic
THE DYSTOPIAN PROTAGONIST

- Feels trapped by oppressive dystopian force and struggles to escape
- Questions the status quo of society
- Believes that something is horribly wrong with society and typically believes that it is up to him/her to fix it
- Through the protagonist’s perspective, the audience recognizes the negative aspects of the dystopian world
NOTABLE WORKS OF DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

- 1984 - George Orwell
- Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury
- Brave New World - Aldous Huxley
- Anthem - Ayn Rand
- Lord of the Flies - William Golding
- The Giver - Lois Lowry
EXAMPLES OF DYSTOPIAN FILMS

- The Matrix = technological
- Minority Report = governmental
- V for Vendetta = governmental
- WALL-E = post-apocalyptic
- I, Robot = technological/corporate
- Equilibrium = governmental
- The Terminator = technological
- 28 Days Later = post-apocalyptic