

# Dystopian Fiction

B.A. Second Year

*English Literature II*



The word **Dystopian** is related to **Dystopia** which is an antonym of a **utopia**. **Dystopia** is when the condition of that place is extremely bad or unpleasant.

- Utopia is when the community or society is perfect or ideal.
- *Utopia* means a place that we can only dream about, a true paradise.
- The word *utopia* was coined in 1516 by Sir Thomas More when he wrote *Utopia*. He describes an ideal political state in a land called Utopia, or Nowhere Land.

**Examples:** The biblical Garden of Eden in Genesis

Plato's *Republic*: describes a perfect state ruled by philosopher-kings.

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726): presents various exotic communities in far-off lands.

# What Is Dystopian Fiction?

- It portrays an utterly horrible or degraded futuristic society.
- The general atmosphere in the novel is characterized by
  - ❖ mass poverty
  - ❖ public mistrust & suspicion
  - ❖ police state
  - ❖ squalor
  - ❖ suffering, and oppression.
- It explores the dangerous effects of totalitarian state on humanity's future.



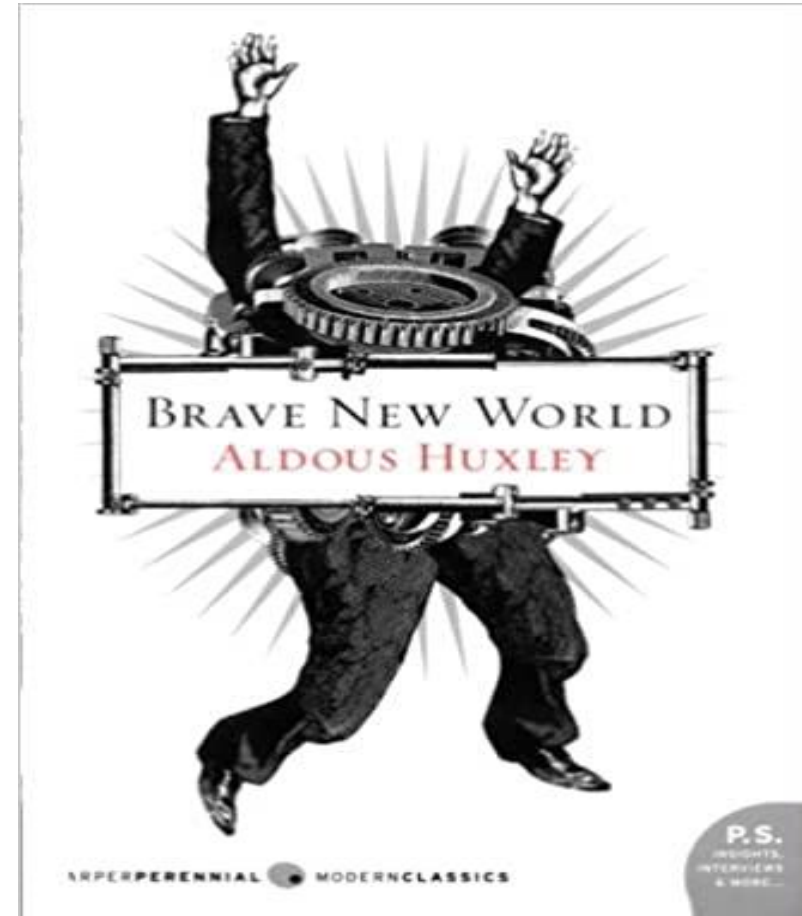
# Government or an oppressive ruling body controls everything.

In George Orwell's *1984*, the world is under complete government control. The fictional dictator Big Brother enforces omnipresent surveillance over the people. It has the unheroic heroes.



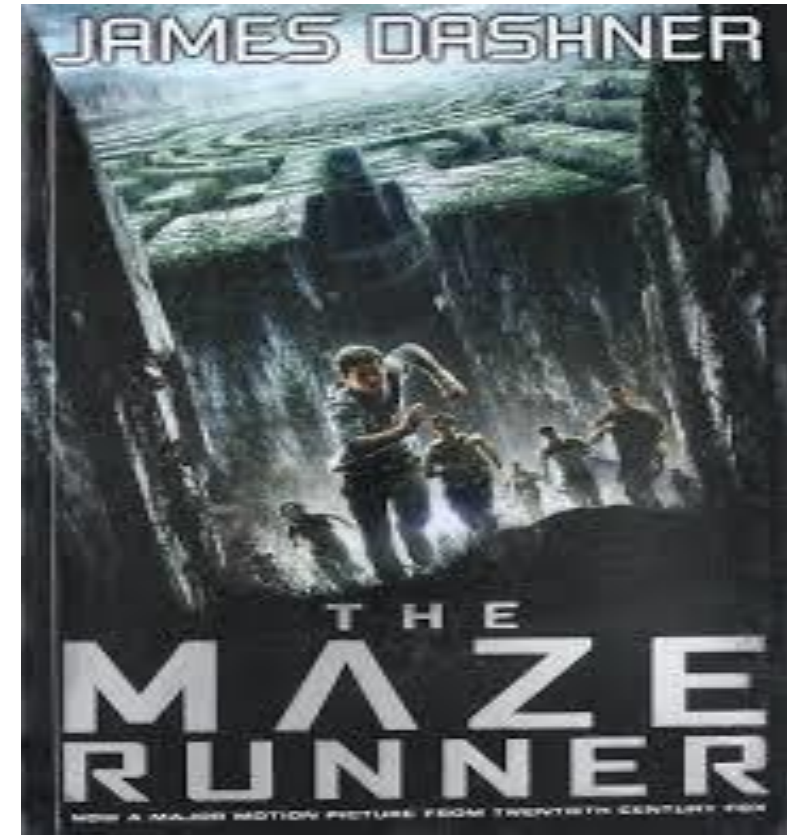
**Advanced science and technology is the controlling and omnipresent force.**

*Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, written in 1932, explores the danger of technology. The ruling World State uses powerful conditioning technologies to control reproduction and citizens' actions.



These novels are often set in places that are inhabitable, have been destroyed, or are preparing for destruction.

- *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner chronicles a world which had been destroyed by massive solar flares and coronal mass ejection. In the first part, a group of teenage boys are stuck in an imaginary place called The Glade and have to find their way out of its ever-changing maze.

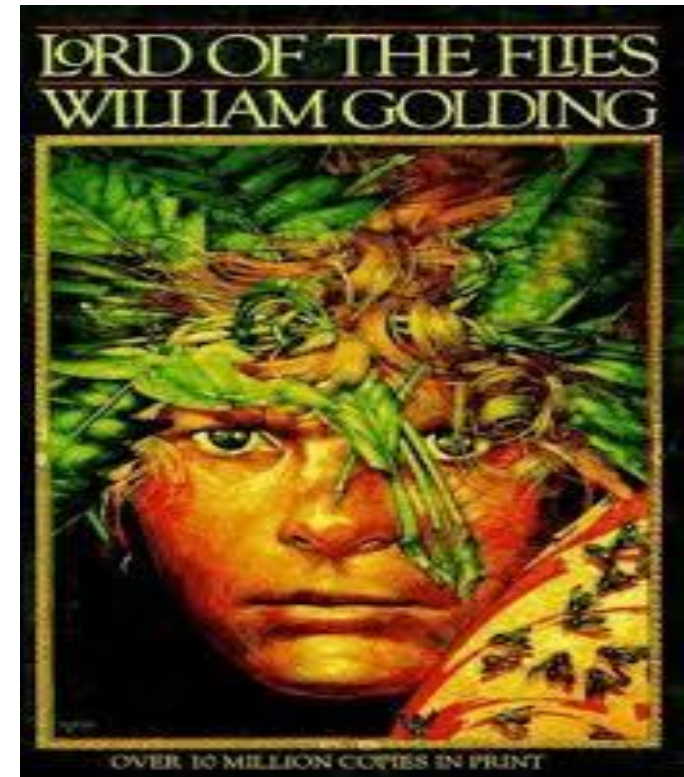




# The oppressive powers and destruction in dystopian worlds often leave the characters to survive and fend for themselves.

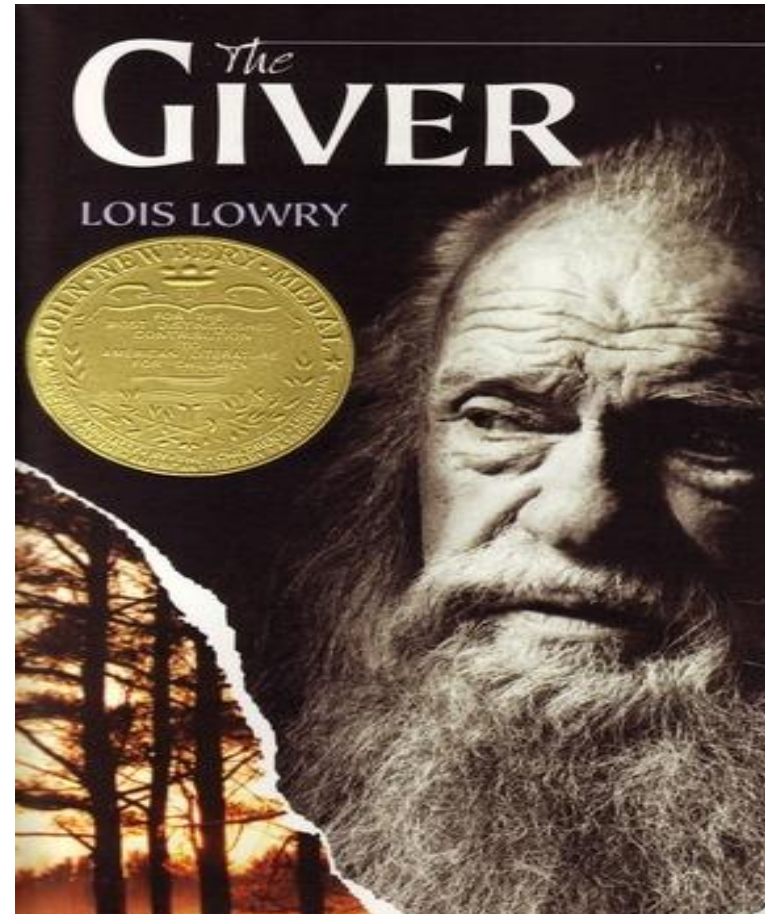
*Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, written in 1954, is about a group of schoolboys who are abandoned on a tropical island after their plane is shot down during a fictional atomic war. Conflicts emerge between the boys as they struggle to build a civilization and fight for survival.

.



It shows the loss of individualism as the characters feel an inability to think freely and creatively.

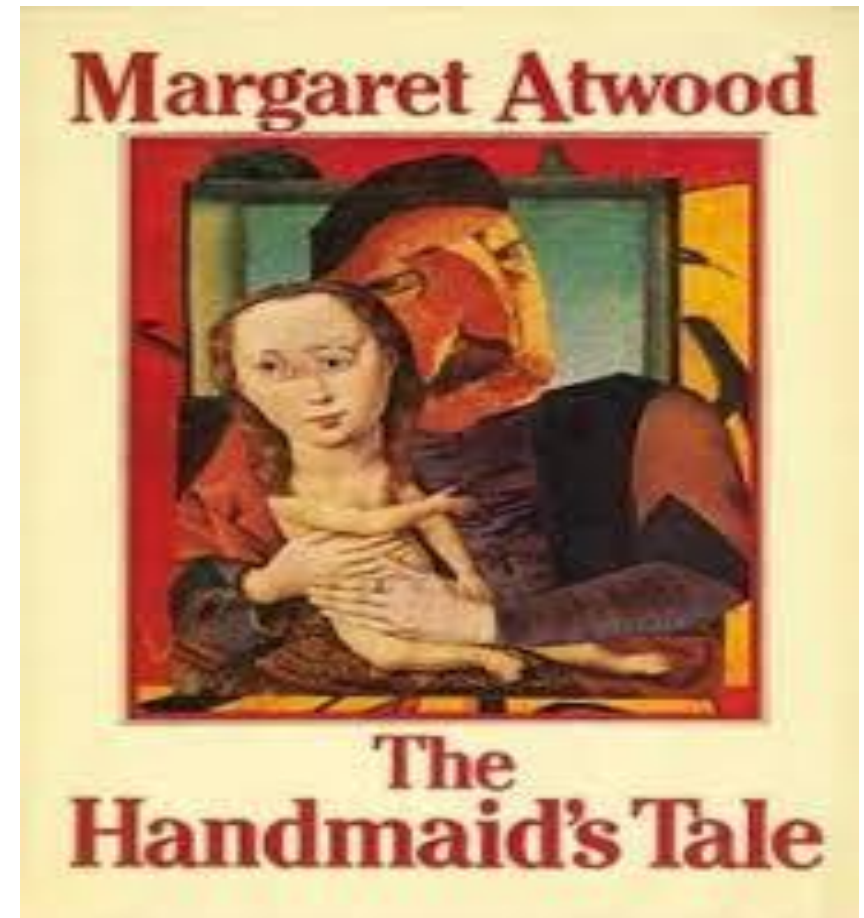
- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry is a 1993 young adult novel about a society that has no pain because the community has all been converted to “Sameness.” The story follows a 12-year-old boy who is selected to be the society’s Receiver of Memory. He will store the memories of the community before “Sameness” was enacted.





**It educates and warns humanity about the dangers of certain social and political structures.**

- Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale* takes place in a futuristic United States, known as Gilead.
- It has dangerously low reproduction rates, so, handmaids are assigned to bear children for elite couples that have trouble conceiving.
- It cautions against oppressive and patriarchal totalitarian states.



Thank You !

Shashi Bhushan (Assistant Professor: English)

Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Rajkiya Mahavidyalaya Tilhar, Shahjahanpur