Week 1: Intro to Dystopia

Week 2: Character & Plot

Week 3: Setting & Point of View

Week 4: Scenarios – Environmental & Nuclear Disaster

Week 5: Scenarios – Biological & Social Disaster

Week 6: Purpose of Dystopia – Warn, Entertain & Imagine
Setting = environment (time/place) of story

Basic setting components:
- Historical era & cultural-political context
- Physical context – geography, city/landscape
INTRO: SETTING & POINT OF VIEW

- Significance of setting
- How setting communicated – via viewpoint
  - Narrative perspective through which story told
  - Senses and filters action and setting
Types of dystopic settings:
- Primitive, post-nuclear war desert -> Mad Max
- Neon super sprawl -> Blade Runner
- Isolated, rural village -> World Made By Hand
- Drab totalitarian cities -> 1984, Elysium
SETTING: COMMON SETTINGS

Post-disaster/primitive/tech scarce society:

- Re-purpose materials -> limited goods
- Lost knowledge/limited skills -> handcrafts
- Decrepit buildings -> decayed, lost past

Examples – Canticle for Leibowitz, World Made By Hand, Killers, Drowned World, Eighth Wonder, End of the World As We Know It
POST-DISASTER: PRIMITIVE TECHNOLOGY
RURAL: ALLOTMENT GARDENS
SETTING: COMMON SETTINGS

Post-industrial/centralized/high tech society:
- Advanced technical tools & infrastructure
- Uniformity in look, dress, actions, places
- Controlled work/family environments
- Examples – Equilibrium, A Perfect Day, Brave New World, Fahrenheit 451, Blade Runner
POST-INDUSTRIAL: HIGH TECH URBAN
URBAN: SMART CITIES

Smart Technology
Smart Governance
Smart Mobility
Smart Buildings
Smart Energy
Smart Planning
Smart City
Regular world up to point of disaster:

- Moment just before end of all/massive change
- Reality is familiar – today’s dress, roles, western world infrastructure
- Build up disaster causes – domino effect
- Examples – End of the Whole Mess, Contagion, Station Eleven, Water Knife
REGULAR LIFE: COPING BEFORE CLIMAX
ACTIVITY: IDENTIFY SETTING

Take week’s readings. In a group, discuss:

- **Time**: Historical period – time based on what events (moment of change in culture)
- **Geography**: City or rural? Housing and transportation?
- **Class & Wealth**: Scarcity or wealth? Equality or divides?
- **Significance**: Why use this setting?
## ACTIVITY: SETTINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STORY</th>
<th>Time / Major Event</th>
<th>Geography: City/Rural</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Rich or Scarce</th>
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<td>End of Whole Mess</td>
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Setting - Drowned World

- Time: Future – from the point onwards when the Sun got hotter
- Geography: Europe, London; from cosmocity to drowned Jurassic world; swamp; salvage buildings – decaying luxury
- Class & Wealth: Scarce population; admin, wealthy, scientist, scavengers – value system divides
SETTING – END OF THE WHOLE MESS

- Time: Future – from the point onwards when disease spreads, will kill narrator
- Geography: America, anywhere; from a regular town to a world of idiots or wiped out population
- Class & Wealth: Scarce population; narrator exists and few others if any
**SETTING – THIS PERFECT DAY**

- **Time:** Future – from the point onwards when machine established
- **Geography:** Anywhere; zones of control; pod-like world of controlled community and futuristic infrastructure; no maps of outside
- **Class & Wealth:** Perfect population; controlled jobs/family groups; equality with bureaucracy that controls minds with meds
Stephen Close talks about how dystopia tries to make us aware of problems by slightly changing and making strange issues that we are otherwise familiar and comfortable with in our world.

Defamiliarization. Watch from 2:22 to 4:12 min.
Setting = perspective from which story seen/experienced

Common points of view in any story:

1\textsuperscript{st} person = “I” did, saw, felt

3\textsuperscript{rd} person limited = “he/she” saw, did, felt

3\textsuperscript{rd} person omniscient = same as limited but know mind of all characters in the story
Point of View: Components

- **Setting** = persons/events described-ordered
- **1st person** = “I” felt -> inside the character speaking and know all of their thoughts
- **3rd person limited** = “he” felt -> outside narrator knows something about some characters
- **3rd person omniscient** = God-like narrator knows everything about all characters’ thoughts
POINT OF VIEW: EFFECTS

- 1st person = give readers limited but intimate understanding of what is happening and why - > do readers trust this viewpoint? Authoritative?

- Multiple 1st person viewpoints give more perspective on how different people experience the world; but readers may not draw close to any one character
Telling story from removed, 3\textsuperscript{rd} person perspective -> broad understanding of why things happen in this world ->

Depending on how much 3\textsuperscript{rd} person knows of characters’ mental life (limited or omni), this understanding can be deep and intimate, or removed and general
ACTIVITY: POINT OF VIEW

In groups, determine which point of view used in one story:

- 1<sup>st</sup> person = “I” felt
- 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited = “he” felt
- 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient = God-like insight into all characters and their thoughts

What is the attitude to the world? What would happen if the viewpoint changed?
# Activity: Point of View

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<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; omni</th>
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Common viewpoints can be told through voices – what is the narrator’s voice?

Common first person voices:
- Voice of betrayal, disappointment, victim
- Voice of tough, hardboiled survivor-hero
- Voice of surprised, personal growth
VIEWPOINT AND NARRATIVE VOICE

Common 3rd person voices:

- Voice of knowing
- Voice of experience
- Voice of objectivity
- Voice of distance
- Voice of intimacy
- Voice of empathy
Voice of the narrator is their particular way or style of seeing the world:

- Voice of betrayal, disappointment, victim
- Characters who can’t cope in the dystopic world; victims of the world; events/actions and other characters filtered through a frightening, distrustful lens
Voice of tough, hardboiled survivor-hero

Narrator is the hero or has entered into mind of hero; world seen through lens of a survivor able to make their own way in world, solve problems and overcome obstacles; confidence; may view others with suspicion or cynicism; weighs options, takes risks
Voice of surprised, personal awakening and growth

1st or 3rd person narrator expresses transformed self-perception and perception of others, outer world; multiple viewpoints used to tell an eclectic history where ideas about world change
SUM UP: VIEWPOINT & SETTING

1. Setting is the time and place of a story
2. Setting is the context for action -> geography, infrastructure, wealth, social divides
3. Viewpoint describes setting -> gives readers feelings about world
4. 1st or 3rd person creates more or less inner knowledge of character feelings -> trust narrator?
FILM, SETTING & VIEWPOINT

Blade Runner (1982) - LA - opening scene

Equilibrium (2002) - Discover art & feeling

Gattaca (1997) – 1950s future world
- Process of genetic selection
- Taking someone else’s superior’s DNA