



Dystopian Society

UNION GROVE HIGH SCHOOL

Definition and Characteristics



Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system.

CHARACTERISTICS AND DEFINITION

Utopia

A place, state, or condition that is ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions.

Dystopia

A futuristic, imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral, or totalitarian control

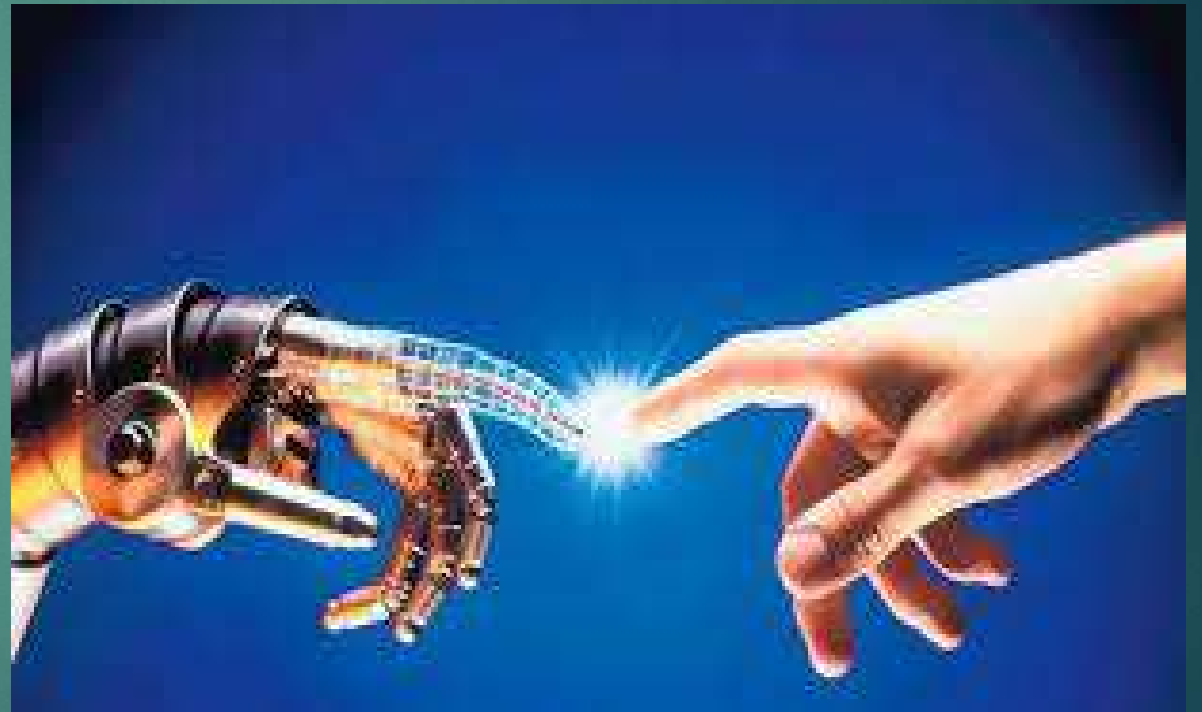
Characteristics of a Dystopian Society

- Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.
- Information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted.
- A figurehead or concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society.
- Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.



Characteristics of a Dystopian Society

- Citizens have a fear of the outside world.
- Citizens live in a dehumanized state.
- The natural world is banished and distrusted.
- Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.
- The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.



Types of Dystopian Controls

- ▶ Most dystopian works present a world in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through one or more of the following types of controls:
- ▶ Corporate
- ▶ Bureaucratic
- ▶ Technological
- ▶ Philosophical or Religious



Corporate Control

One or more large corporations control society through products, advertising, and/or the media.

Examples include *Minority Report* and *Running Man*.



Bureaucratic Control

Society is controlled by a mindless bureaucracy through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, and incompetent government officials.

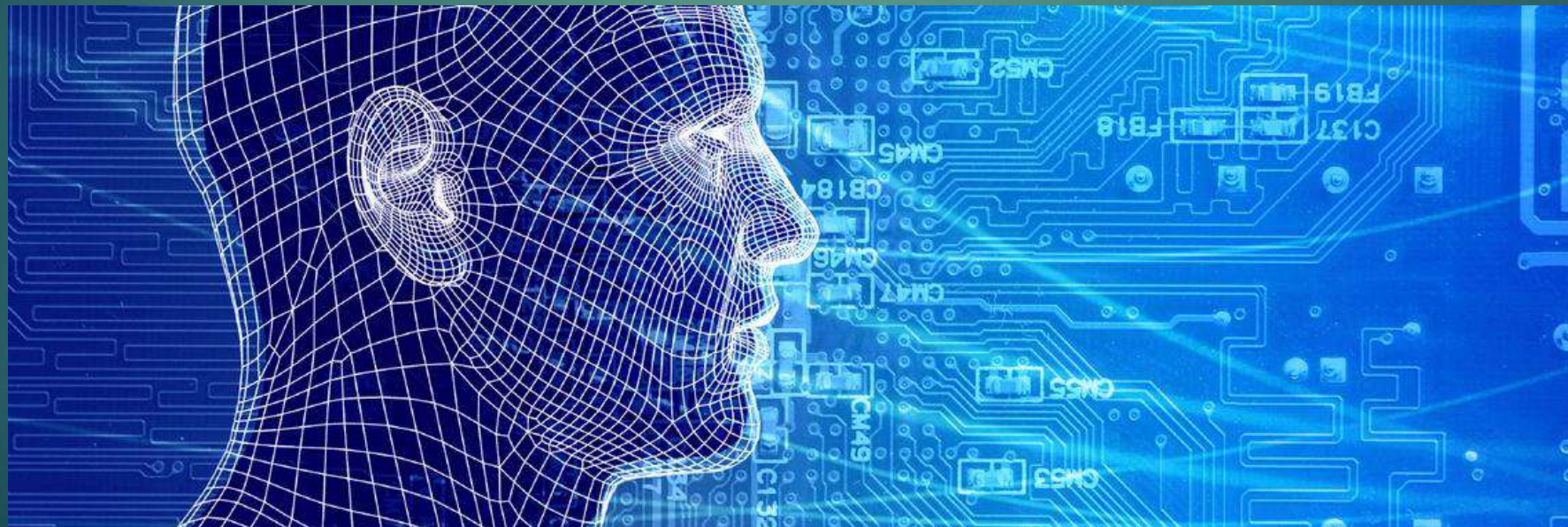
Examples in film include *Brazil*.



Technological Control

Society is controlled by technology—through computers, robots, and/or scientific means.

Examples include *The Matrix*, *The Terminator*, and *I, Robot*.



Philosophical or Religious Control

Society is controlled by philosophical or religious ideology often enforced through a dictatorship or theocratic government.

- ▶ Examples include *Animal Farm*



The Dystopian Protagonist

- often feels trapped and is struggling to escape.
- questions the existing social and political systems.
- believes or feels that something is terribly wrong with the society in which he or she lives.
- helps the audience recognize the negative aspects of the dystopian world through his or her perspective.

