

DYSTOPIAN CHARACTERS

- Dystopian novels use characters as symbolism more so than most other genres. This is due to inherent themes of individual freedom and liberties that are often restricted. The easiest way to make symbols of liberty, hope, or these other ideas is to make them living, breathing characters.



CHARACTER ARCHETYPE

- An Archetype is a story element or theme that shows up in a majority of stories of a certain type. For example, in super hero comics, the idea of a modest secret identity is a type of archetype. A Jedi could be argued as a monastic knight archetype, meaning a religious or Zen-type warrior.
- Dystopian literature and stories have a few important, reoccurring archetypal characters that are almost mandatory for this type of story.



1 — THE NEW REBEL (AKA- HERO)



- Almost always the Protagonist
- The New Rebel is the character who is very much a part of the dystopian system. They can even be a proponent for it, or a high ranking member of the dystopian society. However, after some significant event, they begin to question the Dystopian society and inevitably turn against it, often at great personal cost.



2 — THE NAÏVE



- An innocent character, often one who seems out of place in the dystopian society.
- They are sometimes aware of the negative aspects of their society, but can also be complete unaware of its dystopian nature.
- They are often killed or sacrificed as a part of the systems rules or events, which has a strong effect on the main character.
- They are more often than not a female love interest or child.



3 — THE ONCE BEST FRIEND (AKA THE SHAPESHIFTER)

- A character that the protagonist/new rebel greatly trusts within the dystopian society.
- This character will often help the new rebel break some of the society's rules, but is not completely dedicated to rebellion themselves.
- They will usually be killed if they ever completely devote themselves to the idea of rebellion.
- They will usually betray the new rebel if they never fully devote themselves to the idea of rebellion.



4- THE LOVER



- A romantic interest for the new rebel/protagonist.
- Often combined with the naïve for the sake of a simpler narrative.
- This character is often inspired to rebellion by the new rebel. If they do not follow the new rebel into rebellion, they are probably not the actual lover of the new rebel.
- This character will almost always suffer great personal trauma or loss for the sake of the protagonist/new rebel. This can include death.



5 — THE ENEMY OF THE STATE (AKA MENTOR)

- A character or place that is in practically open rebellion against the dystopian state of the world.
- They will openly challenge the dystopian world's ways, and are often the ones to initially inspire the New Rebel.
- They usually seem completely out of place for the dystopian world, if not above or outside it.
- They die almost 99% of the time.



6 – THE STATE (AKA- THE SHADOW)

- A character or entity that represents everything the Dystopian world is. They do not have to be a real person.



- This character, real or otherwise, is often the main antagonist for the story. They are almost always above the laws of the Dystopian world, and will do anything to keep that secret. They are usually quick to kill or eliminate any threat, and are prone to having that weakness destroy them.



DISCUSS AND RESPOND - CHARACTERS

- In a discussion with your group, attempt to define the characters you have encountered so far in your novel, according to the archetypes shown today in class. If a character is missing or hard to label at this point, what does that mean? How could these characters change? What can we assume will be each character's fate by the end of the novel according to the archetypes?
- 1 page individual response due by the end of class THURS.



THE LIST

- The New Rebel (Hero)
- The Naïve
- The Once Best Friend (Shapeshifter)
- The Lover
- The Enemy of the State (Mentor)
- The State (The Shadow)

