



# Apocalypse Now, Dystopia Later

The End of the World and Beyond in YA Literature

# Yellow Locust: An Origin Story

- Images
  - Brother and sister sifting through rubble
  - Man with a switchblade fighting in a village square
  - Man smiling behind reflective sunglasses
- Characters
  - Selena – young, tough, street brawler
  - Simon – innocent, bespectacled, artistic
  - Marcus – sardonic, deadly, masterly with a switchblade
  - The Mayor – enigmatic, erudite, devious
- The Story -> The World
  - Where are they? What happened to bring them there?

# Armageddon: a Noble History

- Myths/Religious Texts
  - Ragnarok, Revelations
- Classical Literature
  - Omega: La Fin du Monde, The Last Man
- The Atomic Age
  - On the Beach, the Chrysalids, I Am Legend
- Modern Era
  - The Stand, The Road, Cat's Cradle, Y: the Last Man
  - The Handmaids Tale? The Hunger Games? 1984?

# Post-Apocalypse versus Dystopia

## Post Apocalyptic Fiction

- Catastrophe experienced by characters (in backstory or as part of narrative)
- Society crumbling or vanished
- Governments small and factional, if present

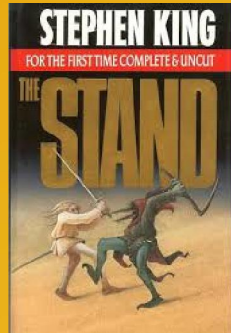
## Dystopian Fiction

- Catastrophe experienced in character's past (backstory) or before their lifetime
- Society partially or fully reformed
- Government omnipresent, violent, or repressive

Post-apocalyptic fiction = Dystopian prequel?

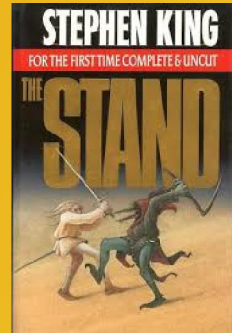
Dystopia = (possible) post-apocalyptic sequel?

# Apocalypse to Dystopia: A Timeline



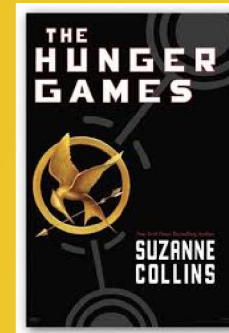
## The Stand (1<sup>st</sup> half)

- Catastrophe occurs in opening pages
- Social breakdown witnessed firsthand



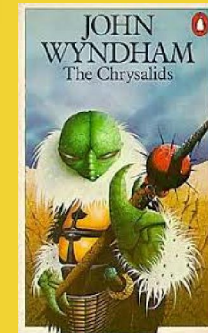
## The Stand (2<sup>nd</sup> half)

- Characters emerge from chaos, form communities
- First seeds of despotism (Flagg's Vegas)



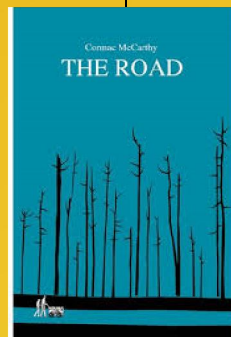
## The Hunger Games

- Multiple generations removed from catastrophe
- Despotism established
- Rebellious factions remain (District 13)



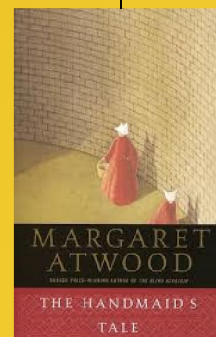
## The Chrysalids

- Catastrophe in distant past, becomes myth
- Governments return to pre-industrial form



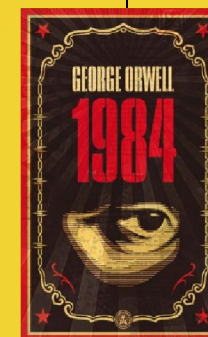
## The Road

- Catastrophe occurred in recent past
- No social cohesion; lawlessness reigns



## The Handmaid's Tale

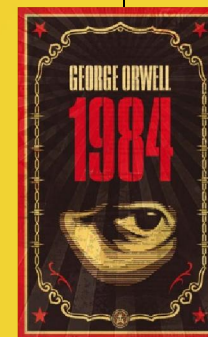
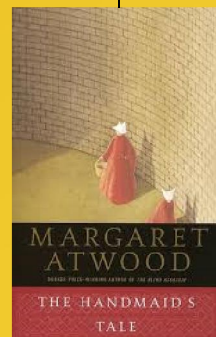
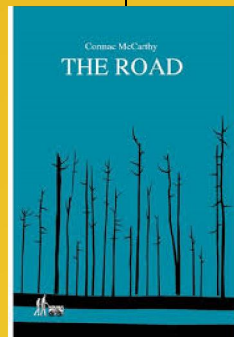
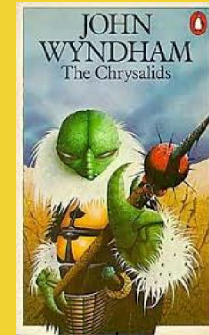
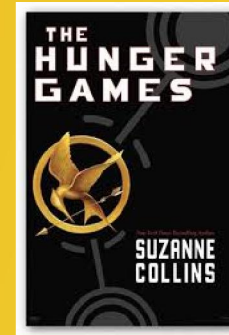
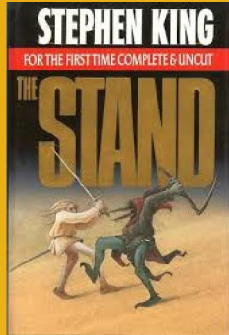
- Catastrophe occurred in remembered past
- Despotism holds sway
- New laws/mores emerging



## 1984

- Catastrophe expunged from memory
- Despotism is all-powerful
- Rebellious factions assimilated/quashed

# Placing Yellow Locust on the Timeline



# Why post-apocalypse/dystopia?

- Human as social animal
- Political/environmental/technological anxiety
- The need for authority vs the need to rebel
- Others?