

Similarities in
dystopian novels:
comparing 'among
the hidden' and 'the
sky insid...



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What if you had to hide in your house your whole life? Or live a life where you were brainwashed into thinking everything was perfect? In dystopian societies, you don't have any other choice than to follow the rules of society and live a certain way. This brings up a similar concept amongst dystopian novels that authors follow. Among the Hidden by Margaret Peterson Haddix and The Sky Inside by Clare B. Dunkle are two examples of dystopian novels that are placed in entirely different dystopian worlds, yet share common characteristics of what people believe to be a dystopian society. This essay will discuss the similarities in the portrayal of dystopian societies through citizen's fear of being constantly monitored, propaganda to keep the status quo, and the fear citizens have towards those in power.

The first similarity is that both books portray their citizens as frightful that they are being constantly monitored. In the book Among the Hidden the citizens think that if they do something wrong the population police would know. In one part of the story, a character named Jen, a rebel, says "Don't tell me your family believes that Government propaganda stuff," she said. "They've spent so much money trying to convince people they can monitor all the TVs and computers, you know they couldn't have afforded to actually do it. I've been using my computer since I was three- and watching TV too- and they've never caught me." (Haddix 68.) This demonstrates how the government is telling everybody that they have eyes everywhere. They are brainwashing people to think they have access to everything they do when in reality they do not have that power. They only say this so that people will follow the rules and no one will want to be different or take a stand.

Similarly, in The Sky Inside, there are several parts where Martin and his Dad

talk and his Dad warn him about the walls. "You're right Dad," he said in a husky voice, "The walls really do have ears (Dunkle 81). And nobody really knows if it's true or not. In both of these novels, citizens tend to think they are being watched, which makes citizens not able to do something freely. This shows that people in a dystopian society tend to think of something that might or might not be true because of baseless rumors made out of fear.

The second similarity is that both societies are run by misleading information or propaganda that the government is making to keep the status quo. In *The Hidden*, the citizens do not know that the government is making up lies to keep people from protesting. An example of the scene where Luke meets Jen again, she explains that "The Government was scared we'd all run out of food if the population kept growing. That's why they made you and me illegal, to keep people from starving." (Haddix 82.) The meaning of this quote is that the government were trying to make the citizens believe that they were doing this to protect the citizens, and so everyone thinks it's a great idea; making them believe in everything the government is saying. Also seen in *The Sky Inside*, where people are led into thinking that the outside world is contaminated and destroyed. "No one can live outside!" "It's a lie," (Dunkle 139). In the book, the author describes how citizens believed that the President was only doing what was best for the citizens. Nobody who went outside ever came back so everybody just assumed that they didn't survive—even if the government knows this is not true. In both novels, the figureheads create propaganda which makes the citizens paranoid. Also, citizens tend to believe in them, which makes the government's job easier. This demonstrates how in a dystopian society, it is

easy to believe in the wrong thing since a lot of people are oblivious to what is actually going on.

The last characteristic is that the citizens are afraid of the outside world. In *Among the Hidden*, the people who are most afraid are the third child or the Shadow Kids. Since the main character was the third child, he was forced to stay home and stay away from the windows, so no one on the outside could see him. Not even the barons were allowed this. Even if somebody wanted to have more children, they would have to consider abortion or see their child get killed at birth (Haddix 10, 11). Due to the law that states how families were only allowed to have 2 children. Because of all the things Luke has heard or seen the more he gets scared of the outside world and thinks of himself as a coward because he doesn't even take an action (Haddix, 37). However, in *The Sky Inside*, the author discusses a different idea where every citizen is afraid of the outside world. Since they heard so many stories about people being driven away from society from the steel dome, they are afraid of what will happen beyond it (Dunkle). Citizens in the book *The Sky Inside* don't know that they are receiving misleading information; merely following propaganda fed to by the government due to their fear of the unknown. In both of these novels, citizens or a part of the population are afraid of the outside world, as a result of the propaganda and misleading information.

In dystopian novels, there are similarities in the portrayal of these societies of citizen's fear of being constantly monitored, propaganda to keep the status quo, and the fear citizens have towards those in power. The most dominant characteristic is how the society is run on misleading information, <https://assignbuster.com/similarities-in-dystopian-novels-comparing-among-the-hidden-and-the-sky-inside/>

even though the other two are equally important. It is more prominent because it makes people become more oblivious to what is actually going on.