

WRITING PORTION (10 points)

(Use your own piece of paper to write your response.)

After reading and analyzing the two articles, “The Rise of Superhero Films” and “The rise of the dystopia: Popularity of dystopian themed films and novels sky-rockets” write an argumentative essay that takes a side on which genre, dystopian or superhero, will continue to rise in popularity.

Be sure to include:

- An introduction paragraph with a well-developed thesis statement
 - At least 3 body paragraphs organized by TIDDIDDE
 - An organized conclusion paragraph
 - Evidence from both articles.
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Article #1

The rise of the dystopia: Popularity of dystopian themed films and novels sky-rockets

By Rachel Diebel,

September 17, 2013 <http://mastmedia.plu.edu/2013/09/17/rise-of-the-dystopia/>

- (1)The world is in disarray. A **pandemic** or war or alien invasion has left humanity with a government that started out as an attempt to put together a broken society but became a totalitarian body. Out of nothing, a hero will rise, an outsider no one expected will lead a rebellion to put the world to rights.
- (2)This is the dystopian storyline, a recent trend in entertainment from young adult novels to blockbuster films. Dystopian stories all work from a basic framework: the world is a mess, and someone needs to fix it.
- (3)Dystopian literature has a long history stemming from classic works like George Orwell’s “1984” and Ray Bradbury’s “Fahrenheit 451.” Now, many people think of dystopian literature in the form of books for young adults. The avalanche of dystopian entertainment certainly began there with a little book called “The Hunger Games,” written by Suzanne Collins. Selling millions of copies, “The Hunger Games” trilogy captured the hearts and minds of many readers, and eventually became a hit film of the same name.
- (4)As always happens when something does well commercially, studios take notice and begin adapting other popular young adult novels into movies. A movie version of Veronica Roth’s “Divergent,” starring Shailene Woodley, is set to hit theaters this year, and the early half of 2013 saw the releases of movies like “The Host” and “Warm Bodies.” The dystopian craze has also spread to more adult movies like “Elysium” and “World War Z.”
- (5)While many credit “The Hunger Games” with sparking the dystopian trend, it really only reignited the flames. The real kickoff was a book for young adults by Lois Lowry called “The Giver,” about a boy living in a colorless, seemingly perfect society. “The Giver,” not surprisingly, is scheduled to be adapted into a movie soon.

(6)During this **frenzy** for dystopia, many people wonder what makes the genre so appealing. There are many reasons why it has become so popular. People like to look at the destruction of society and say, “this is where we draw the line” and “we will never go this far.”

(7)It’s comforting to know there is something worse out there, especially in the recent uncertain economic and political atmosphere. In contrast to this, everyone also loves to see the people rise up and overthrow the government. Living vicariously through a character who does something we will probably never do is a very attractive prospect.

(8)In apocalyptic dystopian entertainment, the attraction lies in the thought that maybe we should return to a more simple life, and maybe we could survive and be happier after a catastrophic event. It returns everyone to a level playing field. That is why so called “reality” shows such as “Doomsday Castle” and “Doomsday Preppers” exist. We like to think that we would be ready, when the reality is that most of us would die without our cell phones, let alone without running water.

(9)Additionally, research has shown that dystopian novels tend to arise as a response to times of threat or danger. For example, according to this research by the book sharing, cataloguing and reviewing site GoodReads, fear of communism and fascism in the 1930s-60s spawned Bradbury’s “Fahrenheit 451” and Orwell’s “1984.” It is possible that today’s wave of dystopian literature for young adults is inspired by an event such as 9/11 or even by the vapid nature of pop culture and the fear of what that will do to our society.

(10)Like it or loathe it, as long as there are scary things in the world, dystopian entertainment is here to stay. So stock your underground bunker with water and canned food and settle in for the long haul.

Article #2

The Rise of Superhero Films

Posted on [June 30, 2017](#) by [New York Film Academy](#)

“Wonder Woman.” “Iron Man.” “The Avengers.” “Guardians of the Galaxy.” The past decade or so has seen an influx of superhero films based on comic books — major big-studio movies starring the highest-paid actors in the world (think Jennifer Lawrence and Robert Downey, Jr.) and outperforming any other movies released. This week, the world will enjoy a new addition to the superhero film repertoire: “Spider-Man: Homecoming,” featuring the work of NYFA alumnus Francesco Panzieri on special effects!

While 1990s blockbusters like “Jurassic Park,” “Titanic,” and “Braveheart” were standalone epics based on books or historical events, today’s highest-grossing films are primarily superhero movies, based on a combination of factors such as escapism, cutting-edge special effects, and an older, wealthier population of comic-book fans.

The most significant, and grim, factor behind the rise of superhero movies has been the economic crash of 2008. There were popular superhero movies prior to this, such as “Spider-man” and Christopher Nolan’s excellent “Batman” series reboot, but following the economic downturn — in which many people lost their jobs and homes — superhero movies went into orbit.

People suddenly wanted escapism into a different world where the hero always triumphed and where distinctions between good and bad were easy to tell. Blockbuster epics with tragic endings like “Braveheart,” and “Gladiator” fell out of fashion, as no one wanted to compound the grim economic situation with an equally depressing movie. Comic-book superhero movies, in which the hero triumphs over evil, became more appealing to the general public. (While our economic downturn is not as severe as the Great Depression, it’s notable that the popularity of comic books in the 1930s mirrors the popularity of superhero movies today.)

With the rise of computers, special effects have become more realistic and believable — something that previously limited superhero movies. Compare the stiff, lumbering shark of “Jaws” — a movie that had exceptional special effects for its day — to the beautifully computer-generated creatures and atmospheres of today’s superhero movies.

Special effects designers have a wider range of options to work with, as well as better software and technologies, than they did 20 years ago. Need Captain America to soar to the heavens? Stand the actor in front of the green screen and virtually create the sky behind him. Need Ant-Man to fly through Iron Man’s suit and sabotage it? That can be achieved realistically as well.

Whereas “Titanic” required a replica ship, today’s computer generated imaging can produce entirely believable superhero action scenes through the digital manipulation of pixels.

The third factor in the popularity of comic-book superhero movies is the older age of the audience. Today’s superhero movies — even if they’re rated PG-13 — are primarily made for adults who grew up on comic books and now have a disposable income. These adults are mostly Generation X-ers and Millennials who read comic books as children during the 1970s-1990s and now have the money to see films and buy paraphernalia. While kids can beg Mom and Dad to buy movie tickets and Mom might possibly agree, adults can always purchase tickets and attend films — creating a great source of potential viewers who have fond childhood recollections of their comic book superheroes and villains.

Nobody knows when, or even if, the genre will die out. The source material is near endless, and for sure, many people would go see them. What is certain, though, is that the current Superhero formula will have to adapt as sentiment changes.