

Does the treatment of social manipulation in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Metropolis* reveal the texts' similarities or reinforce their distinctive qualities?

In the face of oppression by propaganda and indoctrination, masses are silenced in the dystopian worlds of Fritz Lang's German Expressionist film, *Metropolis* (1927), and George Orwell's Swiftian satire *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949). The manipulation of society presented in these didactic texts' industrialised milieu underpins the psychological oppression, socioeconomic divisions and attitudes of rebellion that prevail to maintain individuality and humanity. By revealing these intertextual perspectives, each composer aims to satirise their personal situation through the exploration of similar values however the imposing nature of context inevitably alters the product.

Lang's stylised masterpiece of German Expressionism reflects his burgeoning fear of industrialisation. The future of *Metropolis* is interdependent on the co-existence of the 'mass ornament' (Kracauer) and the "Heart-Machine". The evocative use of formalist techniques and visual narrative exhibits the workers as no more than automations, stripped of individuality as they walk in perfect synchronisation. The chiaroscuro lighting explores the physical oppression and the ironic mastery of machine. Practically indistinguishable and with their shared fate, they suffer under the yoke of capitalist and autocratic power. Lang employs a montage of machines cut with the symbol of a mechanical clock and the Schufftan process to emphasise the perpetual hardship in his society. Hence, Lang examines his era in which the solution for Weimar government's debt is to sacrifice the freedom of the individual for rapid industrialisation.

Opposing the social unification sought by Lang, Orwell's totalitarian regime seeks the absolute subjugation of the individual. Orwell published '1984' to warn the world against his feared fate of humanity if capitalism were allowed to seize power as done in Germany under Hitler and in the Soviet Union under Stalin. Big Brother controls Oceania through a combination of surveillance, terror and propaganda. The paradoxical 'war is peace/ freedom is slavery/ ignorance is strength' reinforces the omnipotence of Big Brother and truth is falsified to make the population accept reality as 'whatever the Party holds to be true'. This weakens the independence of individual's mind and forces them into a constant state of propaganda-induced fear. The foreshadowing "we are the dead" captures Winston's acceptance of Big Brother and refers to the metaphorical death of human spirit. The overwhelming presence of telescreens reminds of surveillance and torture of Room 101 and Orwell's neologism of 'Doublethink' has become a well-known euphemism for the types of distortions that politicians and media use to fabricate psychological manipulation and encompass society in a pseudo reality. Orwell's nihilistic ending portrays Winston's psychological oppression and declared 'love for Big Brother' reflecting Orwell's pessimistic view of a world depleted by totalitarian and capitalist greed.

'*Metropolis*' presents an equally dystopian vision of modernity; the two dominant and opposing ideologies, capitalism and communism, is reflected in the dichotomy of the city, echoing the ramifications of oligarchy. The visuals of workers moving to their shift change are juxtaposed with the decadence experienced by the Son's Club, suggesting masses are manipulated through mindless work practices and must stay aligned with the requirements of their class. Mise-en-scene of the two clocks reinforces the notion of the two socio-economic divisions existing in different time zones. The bottom clock counts in 10 hours increments implying that the workers have limited knowledge while the top clock uses a 24-hour system that requires sophisticated mathematical concepts. The autocratic ruler of *Metropolis*, Joh Frederson, presents capitalistic insensitivity and abuses despotic power as the population is subjugated for commercial and political gains.

Whereas '*Metropolis*' depicts how technology entrenches economic divisions, '1984' examines how stagnant industry can also threaten humanity, and develops our understanding of how totalitarian states like Stalin's USSR shape Orwell's polemic of how citizens are politically manipulated by propaganda. Oceania is made up of three distinct classes: the elite Inner Party, the industrious Outer

Party and the proles. When Winston reads Goldstein's book, readers learn that the history of humanity has been a cyclical class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, known as Marxism. Winston believes "If there is hope, it lies in the proles" hoping the proles will become conscious of their oppressed state and initiate a revolution. The irony of "Victory Mansion" establishes an atmosphere of despair and decrepitude evident in Winston's life where individuality is stolen off him "Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres in your skull". Orwell's chiasmus "until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until they have rebelled they cannot become conscious" concludes Winston's belief of the proles' futile plight, presenting equality as a necessary tool for mankind.

Individuals can refuse to be intellectually and emotionally subsumed by the omnipotence of autocracy. In 'Metropolis' the influences of Maria acts as catalysts for rebellion in dichotomous methods, where Maria advocates peace and False Maria alludes to the "Whore of Babylonian" and the "Seven Deadly Sins". The recurring motif "the mediator between the head and the hands must be the heart" prompts Rotwang to create a perfect human for capitalistic gains. This becomes a downfall when Cyborg Maria calls upon libidinal forces, the workers, to send "death to the machines", foreboding potential cataclysm based on Lang's contextual observations of Weimar Regime. False Maria represents the amalgamation of machine and manifests the hubris of man. Thus, Lang's portrayal of robots depicts the fear of social manipulation with technological advancements and its use during rebellious movements.

By comparison Big Brother, reminiscent of Stalin, controls Oceania with the Thought police. Whilst the workers in 'Metropolis' rise in an aversive collective force, Orwell's rebellion is on subversive individual level through Winston. Winston agrees with the Marxist notion that rebellion must occur for equality as "freedom is the freedom to say that two and two make four" excoriating the manipulation of the proles' intellect. In this way, all of Winston's rebellions take the form of ordinary activities for the reader- a love affair, real coffee and chocolate. The totalitarian regime encourages him to rebel, devoted to Goldstein a caricature of Trotsky, and strengthens his relationship with Julia who actively fights for freedom. By examining the vices and follies of his context, Orwell developed the dystopic setting to be a dismal portrayal of a future in which society is manipulated, albeit in a less direct way than 'Metropolis'.

In conclusion, the similarities between Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis' and George Orwell's 'Nineteen Eighty Four' signifies the concerns of totalitarian regimes and a climate of deprivation after war. Orwell reinforces his distinctive hatred of capitalism and presents a didactic warning against war hysteria. Both composers were highly influenced by the world around them and represent the Marxist struggle of the underclasses, leading to their fierce social commentary on oppression, socioeconomic division and rebellion. The intertextuality of their constructed dystopias allows audience to examine how context shapes their criticisms and predictions of humanity and society.