
Friedrich Christian Anton "Fritz" Lang's Metropolis Vs. George Orwell's 1984

As texts are analytically compared, their differing contextual concerns are highlighted and therefore enhancing one's understanding of the humanitarian issues of power and corruption within a socio-political framework. Fritz Lang's modernist silent film *Metropolis* explores humanity's tendency to become corrupt after being exposed to the pretence of status and wealth. Comparatively, George Orwell's postmodern novel *1984* illuminates the way in which power dictated humanity in the post-world war two, dystopian context.

Fritz Lang's 1927 expressionist silent film *Metropolis*, contextually commentates on the economic and political uprising of wealthy industrialists and the projection of corruption amongst humanity as a result. Lang's consternations of such injustice ultimately prompted him to create a New York-inspired gothic horror film targeted towards apprehensive Germans in hope to convey the dehumanisation that exploitation of power brought to society. The intertextual portrayal of this thematic notion presents a distinct separation between capitalists and German citizens, reflective of the transcendent nature of Weimar Germany's plutocracy.

Lang's focussed shot of Freder gazing upon the machines in the underground city illuminates the prominence of the heart machine as a provoking figure of urbanisation, evidenced through impotent workers performing movements in syncopation with the distressed music. This melodramatic mise-en-scene reveals Lang's depiction of how capitalists abuse their power to transform the lower class into extensions of machines, which reinforces that the industry *Metropolis* is running instils dehumanisation. Similarly, the Sons club evokes phantasmagorical lust through the montage scene of faces invoked by the surreal image of the flooding of brochures in Georgy's taxi, to highlight the distinct exotic lifestyle and contrast between social classes therefore demonstrating loss of integrity in order to gain such social vices through power. This demonstration of hedonistic aspirations informs responders that power created through wealth and status implores moral decadence among sub-class citizens, ultimately highlighting humanitarian failure.

Similarly, power and corruption are heavily explored within Orwell's sociological science fiction novel *1984*, and as a response to Joseph Stalin's communist dictatorship Orwell reflects on his personal critique of totalitarian socialism and furthermore produces this text as cautionary tale to alert the intellectuals of the middle class about Stalin's political movement, and a foreshadowing of a dystopian future if not ceased. Critical analysis of this notion allows responders to understand the ways in which power dictated humanity in the post WW2,

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dystopian context.

The ways in which political powers enforce a state of propaganda induced fear in a totalitarian society is focally repeated within the text by the Party's political maxim "war is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength". This contextual reflection reveals the manner in which psychological independence is lost due to political ascendancy, further exacerbating alienation among victims of this control. Political corruption is further alluded to as Orwell hyperbolises "People simply disappeared, always during the night...you were abolished, annihilated and vaporised" which exemplifies the way the Party instantly eliminated all political and social opponents to produce an idyllic utopian society. As a result, responders are encouraged to construe the connection between the implications of this movement and the Spanish Civil War, particularly as Orwell targets Stalin's autocratic movement during 1948. The nature of pure power is indicated as Orwell utilises personal pronoun through O'Brien as he dictates "the party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others". This demonstration of a desire for absolute power is effective in highlighting the unhindered passion and craving for powerful control with no regard for the wellbeing of the majority. Through understanding this desire, responders are able to comprehend the way in which power is the primary influence from Orwell's context as his text, 1984, directly represents his experience in his context and his apprehension for the future.

Through comparison of texts and examining their contextual concerns, responders have an enhanced understanding of how social and political concepts alter ideas of humanisation over time. Represented in George Orwell's satiric novel 1984, Winston repetitively makes reference to dehumanisation through the motif "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two equals four". Similarly, Fritz Lang utilises reoccurring long-shots of the identically costumed workers, plodding in syncopation with heads bowed to illustrate the lack of individuality and freedom they possess. Through this comparison, responders are able to construe that socio-economic and political power suppresses individuality, ultimately dehumanising victims of this control. Although Metropolis and 1984 share similar concepts of abuse of power, the ways in which they misemploy this power distinctively contrasts with one another. This can be further observed through the intertitle spoken by Rotwang "Isn't it worth the loss of a hand to have created the man of the future", evidently contrasting with Orwell's portrayal of political powers as he utilises blunt diction through O'Brien as he says, "The object of power is power". As shown, Fritz Lang highlights how power is used for emotive gain, whilst in 1984, power is gained for the sake of maintaining power. The contrast between the uses of power in these texts is demonstrative of the manipulation of such power in their respective contexts and therefore allows responders to further understand the way in which power is misused overtime.

Conclusively, as Fritz Lang's 1927 silent film Metropolis and George Orwell's science fiction novel 1984 is analytically compared, responders are able to further apprehend how context is

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integral in shaping one's perception of humanity between these alternate time periods.

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