Through comparison and mutual evaluation of Fritz Lang’s film *Metropolis* (1927) and George Orwell’s novel, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949), the nature of government structure on class division and individual identity and the transgressional nature of technology emerge as timeless societal concerns. However, the disparate nature of social, political and cultural paradigms of composers inevitable shape their compositions. Whilst Lang’s representation of dystopic totalitarianism reflects the socio-economic instability of Weimar Germany’s capitalist industrialisation, Orwell’s aversion to fascist totalitarianism encapsulates the escalating ideological uncertainty of the Cold War. Yet, comparing both texts, an extremity of any societal structure resonates as being detrimental resulting in totalitarian control and oppression of individuality. The abuse of technology is explored through maintaining dystopian control and exacerbating the catastrophic revolutions.

**Metropolis embodies Weimar Republic’s autocratic denial of post WWI dystopia through critiquing totalitarian society by highlighting ramifications of class division and a loss of individualism.** During Weimar Germany, the rebellious Nazi ideology appealed to the pride of the populace where the turmoil of WWI reparations and entrenched inequality were channeled by society into anti-capitalist sentiment. Lang elicits a distinct separation between the ruling class and proletariats through Freder’s ignorance, ‘Where they belong...In the depths?’ which portrays an obvious disregard and unimportance of the working class. Mirroring the widening hierarchical separation induced by Germany’s capitalist ideals, Lang utilises dark mise en scene and a wide overhead shot of workers exhibiting uniform expressions and slumped body language to portray the dehumanising force of industrialization. In addition, Lang’s allusion to half naked armies building the tower of Babel parallels the workers’ mechanisation where their proximity suggests interchangeability and nudity connotes to a stripping of human identity. This disempowerment of the individual reflects ramifications of the Second Industrial Revolution of the 1920s in which workers conformed to their social stratification. Hence, Lang’s Metropolis critiques the power imbalances of totalitarian capitalist societies through exploitation of the working class, on the backdrop of a degrading German society.

**Nineteen Eighty Four, critiques the totalitarian power of a contrasting socialist state by similarly highlighting oppressive class divisions and the loss of individual identity.** Orwell emulates the profound anxiety permeating capitalist economies where a fear of communism induced paradoxical government surveillance in the disillusioned postwar period. Oceania’s manipulation of humanity is depicted by Winston’s conceited tone, ‘dumb masses whom we habitually refer to as the proles’, portraying how power is controlled by a minority who dictate life for the population. Furthermore, Winston’s synonymous positioning, ‘Proles and animals are free’,
dehumanises the working class and reveals an evident class segregation. This serrated societal structure results in an abuse of power highlighted by O'Brian's revelation, 'The sex instinct will be eradicated...We shall abolish the orgasm', an invasive intervention to terrify audiences and didactically highlight the ability of fascist control in changing fundamental human nature which serves as a pre-emptive allegorical warning of tyrannical fascist powers during the Cold War. Hence, Orwell's exposure to the immoral brutality of fascist regimes become evident through Nineteen Eighty Four's depiction of class division and loss of individuality to characterize the oppression inherent within an autocratic society. Whilst contextual disparities have shaped the perspectives of both Lang and Orwell, a comparative study reveals that an extreme society construct of any nature is detrimental to humanity.

Metropolis also explores the destructive capacity of technology when harnessed for revolution, reflecting concerns of technology superseding humanity after fatalities of World War I. Lang portrays technological ascension through long shots of machinery in juxtaposition to the miniscule workers which emphasises their enormity and constructing a sense of entrapment. A machine's allusion to the semitic deity, Moloch, as an appropriation of the Old Testament where workers identities were sacrificed to the gods of machinery, characterises technology's malevolence. Lang repercusses the manipulation of destructive technological weaponry in WWI through Rotwang's characterisation as a scientist, 'I have tricked Joh Frederson!', in which his nefarious motivations imbue the technological creations, evoking technology's threat to humanity. Robot Maria symbolises the destructive power of revolution aided by technology, where biblical allusions to the 'Whore of Babylon' and it's visceral control over men to induce chaos positions it as emulating the dichotomous values of its creator. Thus, Rotwang's manipulation of technology in attaining his own ends raises concerns of technology violating humanity and expounds the human flaws of it's creator. In reflection of technological devastating impact on WWI, Metropolis serves as a cautionary allegory for the destructive capacity of technology when harnessed for revolution.

Metropolis's similar denigration of dictatorial manipulation is reflected in its portrayal of the consequential loss of identity as Lang reflects the contextual rise of technology as a catalyst for the dehumanisation of the workers.

Upon their uniform descent into the industrial catacombs the mis-en-scene of the workers' 'imprisonment' behind the bars parallels the technological superiority over man in the symbolised
dehumanisation of lower class Germany; an exploitation of the cosmopolitan insecurity of unemployment resultant of consumerist Capitalism.

In addition Rotwang’s underlying mission to transcend humanistic incapability through the contextually corresponding advances in technology represents the totalitarian strive to achieve homogenisation of the underclass as an instrument to success.

Depicting a perfect totalitarian society in which every human expression is controlled, Big Brother’s access to supreme observation is a satirised metaphor of the rapid technological progression of invasive espionage of the cold war.

Communism induced paradoxical government surveillance in the disillusioned postwar period.

Instead of a catastrophic revolutionary force, Nineteen Eighty-Four explores the institutionalization of technology as a means of control, manipulating the population and retaining totalitarian positions of power. During WWII Britain’s fear of communist tyranny induced paradoxical government surveillance in the disillusioned postwar period. Depicting a perfect totalitarian society in which all humans are controlled, Big Brother’s manipulation of technology through pervasive telescreens affront the privacy and sanctity of the home. Orwell’s depiction of aberrant surveillance reflects the rapid ascension of technology in espionage during the Cold War and generates a frightening communist spectre in warning to audiences. Orwell’s hyperbole, ‘habit became instinct - in assumption that every sound you made was overheard’, reinforces the abuse of technology in controlling people’s daily lives. Furthermore, O’Brien’s sinister metaphor, ‘We shall squeeze you empty...fill you with ourselves’ encapsulates technology’s role in psychological manipulation and indoctrination. Hence, Winston’s later dissension of ‘He loved Big Brother’ exposes the irony in which humans become objectified and mindlessly succumb to INGSOC’s ideologies through constant manipulation. Clearly, Orwell portrays the universal concern of technology as a destructive medium to retain positions of dictatorship control in Oceania, which unlike Metropolis was for revolution.

In conclusion, through the exploration of Metropolis and Nineteen Eighty Four, we see the manifestation of timeless human concerns of the struggle for power and position, from the nature of government structure. This results in class divisions, loss of individuality and technological concerns.
This communism has also led to powers of torture and indoctrination, where Winston is forced to understand, ‘2 + 2 = 5’. This recurring motif challenges fundamental mathematics and illustrates INGSOC’s ultimate power to manipulate truth and humanity.

This is furthered in the contrast between the City of Workers and the Son’s Club. Lang portrays the dehumanising force of industrialisation and capitalism through the mise-en-scene of workers moving mechanically in dull costuming which merges with the darkness of buildings around them.

Body language of hung heads and slumped figures as they walk through large doorways barricaded by prison bars, connote to flocks of sheep moving brainlessly in resignation, succumb to the power of the ruling class. Drawing upon the entrenched class segregations of Weimar Germany, Lang furthers this notion by directly juxtaposing the idle luxury and beauty of the ruling class’ where white costuming and open overhead symbolise freedom and opportunity. In the Eternal Gardens, elaborate and opulent costuming of the ruling class further contrasts with the monotone, basic outfits of the working class, further highlighting class segregation.

The telescreen is another tool utilised by INGSOC, ‘but you could not control the beating of your heart...delicate enough to pick it up.’ The ability of technology in being
able to detect the rapid beatings of a person’s rebellious heart illustrates the capacity of technology in controlling society. I

Furthermore, the censorship of truth extends to the wealthy as conveyed in the intertitle,’Do you know what becomes of those who are dismissed by Joh Fredersen?’ This question highlights the fact that despite his obvious educational privilege, his naivety illustrates censorship and general apathy over the living conditions of the working class.

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1. To what extent does your comparative study of 1984 and Metropolis suggest that the relationship between position and power in society is an important universal concern? In your response make detailed references to both texts.

2. By exploring the original purposes and audiences of texts, we gain a greater understanding of the ideas and values of each text. Evaluate this statement in the light of your comparative study in this elective and make detailed references to your prescribed texts.

3. Changes in context and form offer fresh perspectives on the values in texts.

   How does Orwell’s 1984 reveal a new response to the values explored in Lang’s Metropolis?