**Comparative Essay A-**

**At 1200 words, this doesn’t meet the 1500 word maximum. Greater holistic techniques could have been analysed in each text and further comparisons made between each text.**

Social tension is an issue that has troubled humanity for decades, leading in my cases, to the oppression of a particular class, whilst another prevails. Reflecting the concerns of a Weimar German context, in a period of great anxiety and tension between the classes, Fritz Lang through his film Metropolis is able to convey his perspective on how the issues and division between the higher class and the working class are founded on the ideas of control, Taylorist principles and ultimately the compromising of core values of humanity. Orwell, whilst in a post WWII context, conveys his perspective through his novel Nineteen Eighty Four on similar concerns and the dangers he fears for society in a dystopian form, reflective of those intense concerns explored by Lang.

Social tension can be caused ultimately when there is an imbalance, within a societal structure, as conveyed in both texts. Lang’s Metropolis is a city that unfortunately reflects this structure, focussing on the control of individuals, to convey Lang’s perspective of a controlling government in a struggling Weimar Germany. Land is able to convey this perspective through the character Joh Frederson, who has been symbolically described as “the brain of this city,” representing the power and ultimate control over all of the workings in the city. Already, this conveys a definite imbalance of power between classes, as no society can function most effectively as a dictatorship. Frederson’s power is further described and conveyed through the depiction of his office. Vast amounts of natural light, in an expansive space, accompanied by a large window overlooking the city, highlight Frederson’s panoptical control and surveillance over the city, resulting in the working class have little to no privacy or freedom, creating evident social tension. Orwell whilst showing his perspective via a different medium and setting, also investigates the concept of control and how that can lead to division between classes, leading to social tensions. Following the tensions that had arisen between major world superpowers post WWII, Orwell conveys his perspective via his protagonist Winston, from his novel Nineteen Eighty Four. In a society based on controlling the population, Orwell conveys his fears for humanity through the depiction of outrageous amounts of surveillance in his novel. Winston describes the extent of this to be that “they were always watching, their voice[s] enveloping you,” highlighting the measures being taken to subdue the population. Winston also offers the metaphor, “Nothing was your own, except for the few cubic centimetres inside your head,” once again reflecting the dangers that Orwell perceives for his own society, but also similar to those perceived by Land for his society. In a society in which some individuals are denied their humanity, ultimately there will always be unrest and social tension created, leading in many cases, to rebellion or even war.

The concepts of Totalitarianism and Taylorism were common terms in the early 1900’s and both were recognised by Lang and Orwell. Taylorism, a principle founded on the mechanisation of the working class, ultimately reflected the need for profit in Weimar Germany, as financial and political difficulties gripped the population. Lang however, having realised this, conveys his perspective on the potential it had to create social tensions and the very negative connotations that could be associated with it. His satirisation of the concept occurs via his incorporation of a 10 hour working clock. All of the values in this city are subsequently defined by the rhythm of work, rather than those above ground who are indulging in mansions and free time. This is also compounded most shockingly when a member of the upper class states, “they are where they belong.” Obviously with attitudes such as this, the opportunity for rebellion is incited and intense social unrest created. Orwell, having not been exposed to Taylorist principles, did however recognise in his social context the dangers of strict preventative measures that were being implemented in his society to prevent another war. Seeing the dangers of a potential totalitarian state to ease tensions between Russia and the US, post WWII, Orwell conveys his perspective through the horrific methods imposed by the Party and thought police in his novel to abolish free thought. Winston after having committed through crime, was subjected to horrific conditions and experiences, to “simple humiliate him and destroy his power of logic and reasoning.” The use of the word ‘simply’ here, conveys how terrible the atrocities and barbaric methods indeed are and how of course the the lower class are forced to accept these or die. This also accompanied by the notion that ,”Humanity is the Party,” utilises a paradox to symbolise the brainwashing effect that the oppressive part has had over the population to remove the opportunity for free thought and individuality, similar to those explored in Lang’s piece. Also have to come to terms with the fact that when you commit an act against the part, “[you] were not simply dead, [you] were abolished…an unperson,” symbolises how when a higher class/party exists and oppresses the lower, there are significant social tensions present.

Above all, however, both Lang and Orwell’s major concerns are for the basic rights of humanity that must exist in every individual’s life, to avoid arising political tension. Lang, via his work, symbolises how humanity has been compromised via the shift change scene, utilising an “over the shoulder” shot and low key lighting, to highlight their loss of basic rights. Ultimately this leads to the rebellion of the working class, as a result of the social tensions that have been cultured to ultimately come to the realisation that “the mediator between the head and hands, must be the heart.” Hence, whilst Lang investigates the social tensions that he believes exist in his Weimar German context leading to be the detriment of society, he recognises the good in society and how when this imbalance of power is balanced, and an appreciation of the good and humanity in people recognised, that society can function effectively. Orwell, however, investigates through his own lens, how if the dangers that he perceives in his context continue, and human values are even further compromised, how that will impact society, contrasting Lang. His investigation through Winston as to how, “he always knew his death bed was there and waiting,” symbolises the grief that individuals could potentially need to live through and how that would lead to social tensions. He also investigates how basic human rights of safety and permanence could be denied when Winston exclaims, “not only did they have the illusion of safety, but of permanence,” to describe the tensions that can also arise, following the denial of rights to people and their oppression. However, as he does not explore any mediation, his perspective differs to that explored by Land in Metropolis.

Hence, whilst social tension remains a prevalent issue in society, both Orwell and Lang have explored what can happen if controlling mechanisms, the establishment of a society based on Taylorist principles or Totalitarianism, and the impacts that it can have on humanity and human values. Whilst Lang and Orwell both come from vastly different contexts, their shared opinions and perspective shape an understanding of the dangers of and need to avoid social tensions.